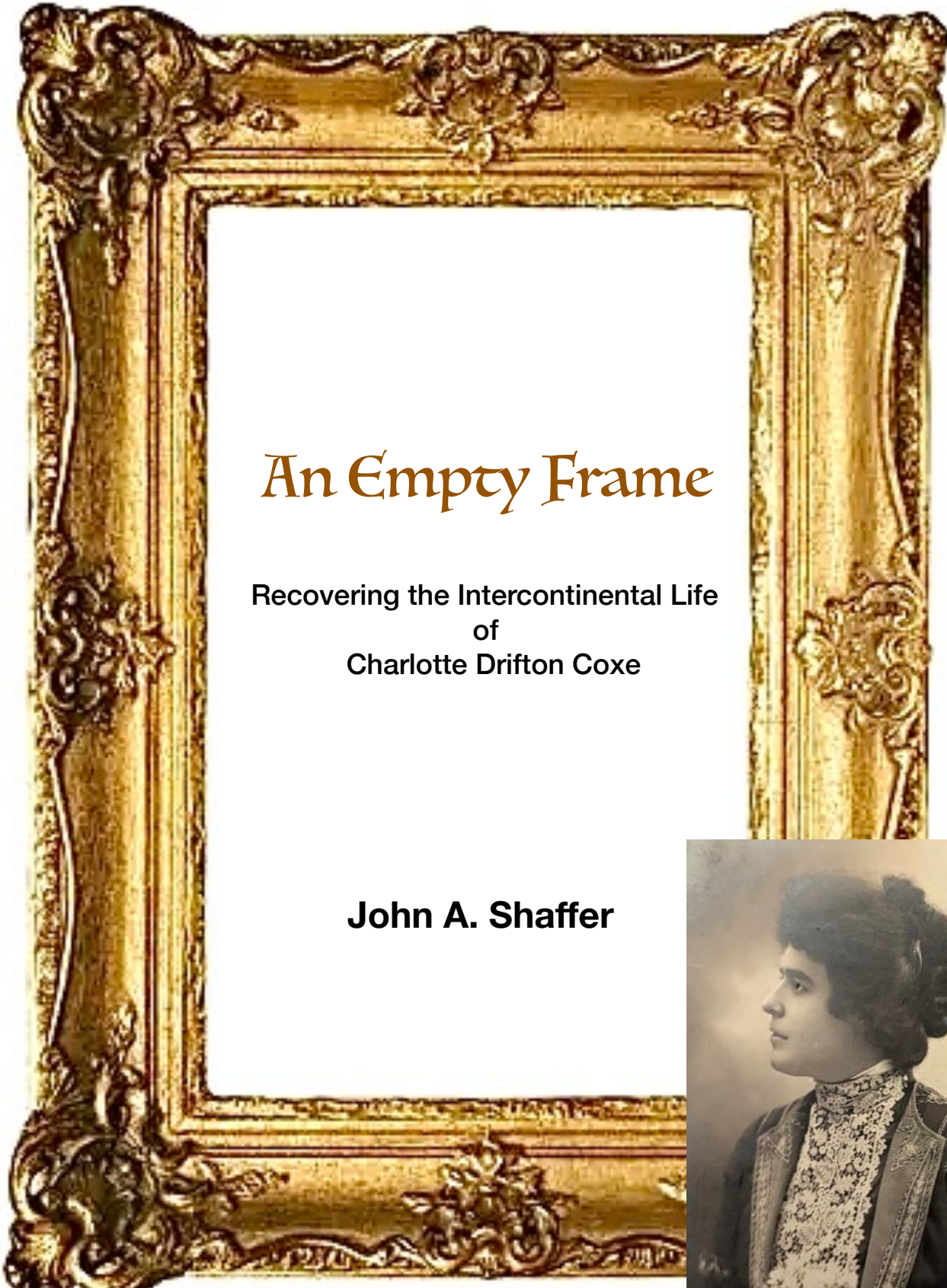




An Empty Frame

Recovering the Intercontinental Life
of
Charlotte Drifton Coxe

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**November, 2025
Shepherdstown
West Virginia**

1. A Prince Comes to Philadelphia

So much was riding on a dinner!

It was the evening of Thanksgiving, 1896 and the brick rowhouse at 1515 Spruce Street hummed with anticipation. Servants adjusted table settings; the three Coxe daughters— Charlotte, Eliza and Mary practiced their Italian conversation skills, laughing at occasional lapses. Their mother Maria took a final nervous glance at the seating plan. Around the table would be ten young women whose family names populated the city's social register— Biddle, Cadwalader, Willing, Fisher, Peters, Mitchell and Sanders— and of course, the misses Coxe.

Seated among them would be the principal officers of the Italian cruiser *Cristoforo Colombo*. At the head of the table would be a guest who had held the attention of American newspapers since the ship first sailed into port several weeks before— the dashing 23-year old Prince Luigi Amadeo of the House of Savoy, Duke of the Abruzzi.

Like many of her peers in the city, Maria bore a string of significant surnames— Middleton from her mother's plantation-owning Charleston family; Fisher from the Philadelphia merchant line into which her mother married. Her own marriage to the eldest of five Coxe Brothers, prosperous developers of Pennsylvania anthracite mining, completed her familial and social identity.



Prince Luigi Amadeo

But Brinton Coxe had died four years earlier, followed soon after by his brother Eckley, throwing family matters into extended disarray. Charlotte, the first Coxe daughter, joined her mother and sisters in mourning during the season that would normally have marked her formal introduction to society. Thereafter, troubled by recurring bouts of deep depression (called “nervous prostration” by her physician), Maria had difficulty attending to social matters. On one occasion, after planning a small dance and writing the notes of invitation, “my heart failed me and I had to toss them all into the fire.” As she wrote to her friend Emily Hale, this state of mind was “so hard on the girls”.¹

Just how Maria's royal dinner came about is uncertain. After other stops on his American tour, the Duke had been persuaded to return to Philadelphia to headline a charity event scheduled for that night. The “Mischianza” was planned to recreate a famously extravagant entertainment staged by British officers who occupied the city in 1778 (through which they “tried hard to win the hearts of American lassies,” as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* recalled). But the recreated event was not to begin until 10 p.m., leaving the *Colombo*'s crew uncommitted for the early evening.

The Mischianza was a project planned by “many of the most fashionable of Philadelphia's women”, a fundraiser to help build a church for the city's black Episcopalians. But apart from the charitable goal, Maria could not have overlooked the romantic overtones of the grand fete. (The *Inquirer*'s historical research noted the

matrimonial outcome for every young woman who had taken part in the 1778 original.) Unable for many months to appropriately support her daughters' social opportunities, she may have seen those unspoken-for hours on the Prince's itinerary as a single, extraordinary way to compensate.

Perhaps others had considered but declined the chance to host this prestigious guest. It was, after all, a holiday on which many had competing plans and obligations. Maria was arguably a logical choice, since her South Carolina family tree included an Italian Contessa of its own. Nonetheless, her doubts resurfaced and grew. "Please do not tell anyone I expect him to dine here," she insisted to Emily, for really I am very uncertain about it and feel horribly set to fall into the chasm of incivility."² Unlike other minutely reported details of the Prince's movements in America, the dinner on Spruce Street received no public mention until a brief notice buried in the social pages—days after the fact.

No letter or memoir offers a record of the meal on Spruce Street. Charlotte, undoubtedly given a role in the conversation, may have shared stories of more than passing interest to the Duke. Through her parents, she inherited noteworthy military connections on both sides of the War Between the States— from General George B. McClellan on the winning side to Henry Bentivoglio Middleton for the defeated Confederates. ("Benti" later returned to Italy and served in the Papal Zouaves and at the court of the Duke's grandfather, King Victor Emmanuel II.)

But of greater relevance to the adventurous prince may have been Charlotte's family link to Elisha Kent Kane, the celebrated arctic explorer. (Her aunt and godmother married the explorer's brother.) By 1896, Luigi already had made several challenging mountain ascents in the Alps³ and harbored dreams about the Holy Grail of nineteenth century exploration— the North Pole. If he showed special interest in the tale of Kane's adventures and the fame that followed, he may have left the house with Brinton's personal copy of *Arctic Explorations* in hand, pulled from her late father's undisturbed bookshelves by the enthusiastic Charlotte.

After dinner was served and conversation waned, carriages waited to transport the entire group to the Horticultural Hall— the world's largest conservatory at the time of its construction for the Centennial Exposition. Doubtless, the visitors were impressed by its European grandeur— blue marble entrance stairs, spectacular chandeliers, and a grand central fountain designed in Rome. Reviews of the Mischianza pronounced it a social success, but a financial failure— owing to what, in hindsight, was considered a serious scheduling error. "So much was going on through the day that many did not feel like going out that night," said the *Inquirer*, noting the University of Pennsylvania football game and the Radnor Hunt.⁴

But the evening was long remembered within the Coxe house. For Maria, it offered a renewed sense of her place in Philadelphia society— a position which had seemed so fragile in the wake of Brinton and Eckley's untimely deaths. For the spirited but socially awkward Charlotte, it stirred a romantic image of life beyond the constraints and

expectations of Philadelphia— albeit a vision requiring fairy-tale rescue by a crisply uniformed prince. Not that night perhaps, but why not someday?⁵

¹ Letter from Maria Coxe to Emily Hare, 11/20/1896. Hare-Willing Family Papers, American Philosophical Society.

² *ibid.*

³ Tenderini, Mirella and Michael Shandrick. *The Duke of the Abruzzi: An Explorer's Life*. Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1997, pp. 22-29.

⁴ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11/29/1896, p. 32.

⁵ In a memorial notice nearly four decades later, the American Alpine Club remarked on the career of its honorary patron, "In His Royal Highness Prince Luigi Amedeo Guiseppe Maria Ferdinando Francisco di Savoia-Aosta, Duke of the Abruzzi, one of the most romantic figures of our times has been lost."

2. A Family Connection

On a spring afternoon fifteen years ago, I pulled into the driveway of a large suburban house in Wayne, Pennsylvania. Hilda Osterhout Young would explain that the distinctive burgundy trim reflected the Vassar school colors of her college days. I was welcomed at the door by a personable caregiver, who ushered me into an adjacent room where Mrs. Young sat patiently in a dark full-length skirt, facing away from the doorway as I entered. Her erect posture set a tone of polite formality for our interview. Though many years had passed since the publication of her promising 1948 novel, I recognized her at once from its striking author photograph.¹ I apologized for my late arrival (in those days before GPS devices were universal). As I took my seat across from her, Mrs. Young asked me why I wanted to know about Charlotte Coxe.

My interest had arisen unexpectedly. Some years before, I was exploring the publishing history of John Keble's 1827 book *The Christian Year*, a set of poems organized according to the liturgical seasons of the Anglican church. Keble's work achieved remarkable circulation throughout the English-speaking world (second only to the Bible) before falling into relative obscurity. I had gathered a cross-section of editions, from cheap paperbacks to elaborately illustrated gift volumes. Most of these were found in predictable places— used bookshops in England or America. But one of them appeared in the listings of a Vienna antiquarian, rather off the beaten path for Keble. I made the purchase.

The delivered book was a fine leather-bound example which nicely complemented my others. But its provenance was curious. On the front endpaper was a neatly penned inscription: "Charlotte D. Coxe from her Aunt & Godmother E. F. Kane, March 30, 1890."² Never one to leave an inviting stone unturned, I had traced its recipient to the Coxe family of Philadelphia and surmised it to be an Easter or Confirmation gift to the giver's 16 year-old niece. Straightforward enough. But a nagging question remained. How had this valued family keepsake made its way across the Atlantic to a German-speaking capital? That question led me to Mrs. Young.

Hilda Osterhout Young, then 86 years old, had a keen memory— and a sensitivity for the family dynamics that make old stories come alive. Born into a prominent Long Island family, her connection to the Coxes came through her 1950 marriage to Brinton Coxe Young— a grandson of Brinton and Maria and a son of Charlotte's sister Eliza,² whose large golden-framed portrait dominated the room where we sat. (John Singer Sargent, Julian Story and others maintained a steady clientele by producing such grand pieces for the Philadelphia elite). I eagerly asked if she knew of a similar portrait of Charlotte. The question led to a long and rather sad story.

As we spoke, Mrs. Young grew more comfortable and animated. She offered what she knew of Charlotte's life— a sudden, somewhat capricious marriage, an immediate departure for Europe, and a life thereafter filled with complications. She recalled pieces of the story from both sides of the Atlantic, though long and puzzling gaps remained. Over a decade after Charlotte's death, the Youngs had traveled to Austria in an effort to resolve some persistent issues of the far-reaching Coxe estate. There, she had learned the answer to my question. The matching portrait had been cut from its frame by Charlotte's son during a period of particular financial stress. (The outbreak of the twentieth century's world wars would twice interrupt the flow of family funds from America). The frame was sold to raise cash and Charlotte's carefully painted picture was never seen again.⁴



Eliza Coxe

From the viewpoint of a novelist, Mrs. Young pointed me to the background of Charlotte's story a generation earlier. As I prepared to leave, she asked her aide to bring a small paper-covered booklet from a table across the room. "I think you'll find this interesting", she said. It was a personal journal filled with hand transcribed poems and short passages from literature, created by Charlotte's mother Maria shortly before her marriage. On the cover, in place of Maria's name, was a short Latin inscription, *Puella Semper Infelixima*— "an always unhappy girl".

Over the years since that conversation, I have wondered what led Maria Middleton Fisher to that self-characterization and why, many years later, Mrs. Young considered it noteworthy. Born in 1847, Maria was exposed to dramatic changes during her formative years. Prominent Philadelphia families like the Fishers who were still sympathetic to the southern cause at the outbreak of the war lost some of their former prestige. And Middleton Place, the plantation home of her South Carolina relatives was burned by Union troops when she was 17 years old, destroying the livelihood of the Charleston Middletons.

But there may have been simpler factors such as Maria's birth order within the Fisher household. The journal of portrait painter Thomas Sully records his commission to create a group picture of the first two Fisher children, "Elizabeth and Sophy". His work for the Fishers appears to end there. The only surviving picture of young Maria is instead a photograph, oddly capturing her with a facial bruise and a small but distinctly visible plaster applied to her chin. Whatever accident had befallen her on the day of the photographer's visit, her decision to let the portrait be recorded anyway may be telling.



Maria Middleton Fisher

¹ Hilda Osterhout's novel of Mexico, *The Flame and the Serpent* was written during her senior year at Vassar and was awarded an Intercollegiate Literary Fellowship prize, leading to publication by Dodd, Mead and Company in the United States and Victor Gollancz in England. The glamorous, angularly posed photo of the author was taken by Soichi Sunami of the Museum of Modern Art.

² Charlotte's book is now in the special collections of Frances Donaldson Library at Nashotah House Theological Seminary.

³ Researching a member of the Coxe family presents two challenges— the enthusiastic repetition of names across generations and an abundance of distractingly interesting secondary personalities. The retention and re-shuffling of names reflects a reverence for Old Philadelphia origins that was evident in a popular rhyme called the "Philadelphia Rosary,":

Morris, Norris, Rush and Chew,
 Drinker, Dallas, Coxe and Pugh,
 Wharton, Pepper, Pennypacker,
 Willing, Shippen and Markoe. (Pronounced as *Markoo*)

The rhyme is cited by Nathaniel Burt in his book, *The Perennial Philadelphians* (p.44), and he makes several additions to the list of revered names that will appear repeatedly in this exploration of the life of Charlotte Coxe: Brinton, Cadwalader, Fisher and Hare.

⁴ That the eminent Julian Story likely created Charlotte Coxe's lost portrait is suggested by a meeting recorded in "Society at Home and Abroad" in the New York Times, March 23, 1902: "On the same evening, Julian Story had a dinner given in his honor by Mrs. Truxton D. Beale. Those invited to meet him, among others, were Miss Esther Hare, Miss Irva Struthers, Miss Charlotte Coxe, C. Willing Hare, Mrs. George Hazelhurst, John H. Ingham, and John Cadwalader, Jr.

3. Two Sisters Married Two Brothers

It was a topic of interest in Philadelphia, but not unusual in an era when influential American families often restricted their matrimonial choices to a relatively narrow circle of “appropriate” prospects to whom they were introduced through structured social interaction. But the case of the Fisher sisters— Sophia and Maria— may have caused more widespread conversation.

Sophia Georgiana Fisher was wed to Eckley Brinton Coxe. Eckley was already the central figure of Coxe Brothers & Company, a firm which was rapidly consolidating coal production on a large tract of Pennsylvania land passed down through the Coxe family. Supplementing a University of Pennsylvania education with advanced technical training in Paris and Freiburg, he was quickly recognized as an engineering visionary. He was two years older than his bride and at 28, had used his years efficiently.

But further linking the Fisher and Coxe families was the subsequent marriage of Sophia’s younger sister Maria to Eckley’s oldest brother Brinton— a union entered with a 14-year age difference between husband and wife. While handling occasional legal matters for the firm, Brinton’s interests lay more in the study of jurisprudence and history. He would later produce several volumes as a translator and as a legal theorist on the United States Constitution. Suiting his scholarly interests and disposition, he would serve as president of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for the last decade of his life.

The relationship of the sisters remained cordial as they entered their intertwined marital lives. But the six year difference in their ages had created patterns that would persist. When, as a child, Maria accompanied her mother on a visit to their extended family in Charleston, Sophia wrote her a lengthy letter conveying greetings to everyone “and your dear little self.” She asks Maria whether she finds Middleton Place as pretty as Alverthorpe and goes on to mention her own accomplishments of the day— “Please tell Mamma from me that I got number “5” for both conduct and French conversation today”. Years later, on receiving the news of Charlotte’s birth, Sophia sent Maria a note of thanksgiving for the safe delivery— still addressing her sister as “Dear Little Rixy” and offering words of comfort as one who had long functioned within the Fisher household as more of an adult-in-training toward her younger sibling.

Brinton, broadly educated like his brother in both Philadelphia and Europe, seems to have assumed the tone of a teacher toward his intended bride from their earliest exchanges. An August, 1872 letter on stationery of Coxe Brothers & Co. addresses Maria as “Dearest Child” and continues “I received your dear little letter yesterday”. After noting that she writes “admirably in both French and English”, he devotes the balance of the page to suggesting that she use “tu” and “te” rather than “vous” in writing to him— “a gentleman in my position of your second person singular.” This rather oddly grammar-focused opening leads on to a discussion of the scarcity of musk melons and the fact that he finds the company’s rural location “rather dull,” quickly adding “I mean for me. If you were here it would be all right.”¹

Maria was not at first enthusiastic about the match, suspicious that she was being manipulated. A letter drafted after a meeting with Brinton went awry bristles with resistance. “I have heard rumors of an intended arbitration, but no one is authorized to act in my behalf.” As for Brinton’s sense that he had been snubbed, she continues, “I have been thinking all day about your note and what I should say in reply. But it is so proud and dignified that it is difficult for me to reply in the same tone.” Perhaps a final version softened her response, since their marriage was solemnized at St. Peter’s Church in Philadelphia on October 10th, 1872.

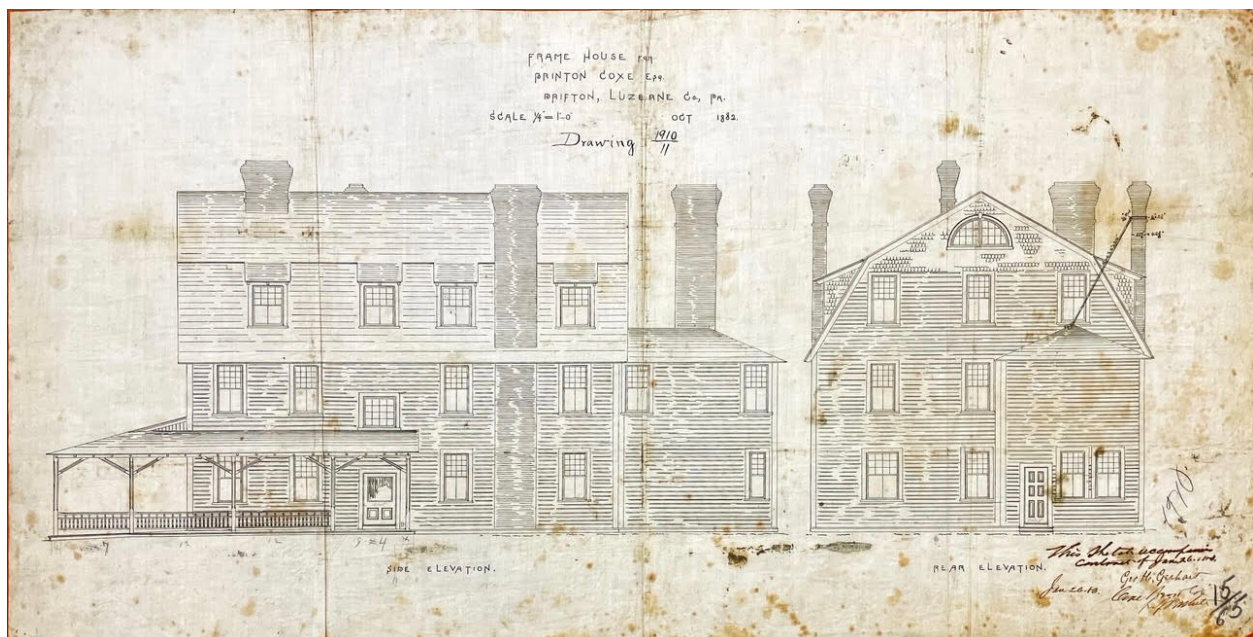
Maria did not enter the relationship without leverage of her own. A surviving document, signed by Brinton, acknowledges that a \$10,000 gift from her father Joshua Francis Fisher is entrusted

“for her separate use” (the equivalent of about \$260,000 today). Yet Brinton often bristled over day-to-day financial matters. “You always lose your pocket book. Eckley approved my arrangement with your mother. You must let your mother pay your board and traveling expenses. Do be a good girl and do not be unkind to me.”¹

For both of the Fisher sisters, marriage required a change of focus from the gracious setting of Alverthorpe, the Fisher family estate in Jenkintown, to the far-removed coalfields of northeastern Pennsylvania. Both couples kept Philadelphia homes and connections, but would spend large portions of their time in Drifton, an industrial center carved out of the rural countryside for the operation of Coxe Brothers and a home for its growing cadre of workers.

Each sister had her own way of adapting. Sophia threw herself wholeheartedly into advancing the welfare of families drawn to the region by the mines— difficult, dangerous and sometimes fatal employment. Over time, this would involve significant philanthropic initiatives in addition to a hands-on project of seasonal involvement with the miners’ children, purchasing and distributing thousands of Christmas gifts from the stores of New York City. Newspaper writers observing life in Drifton would come to laud her as the “Angel of the Anthracite” — a title remembered in the area down to the present day.

From the beginning, Maria expressed herself differently. She and Brinton built a hillside house in Drifton, deliberately removed from those of the other brothers and more rustic in character. They worked together to fashion it into a woodland retreat, with pathways winding among surrounding trees. The site for the house which they originally called “Bear Tree Hill” may have been selected, in part, as an accommodation to Brinton’s fragile health. (He also took extended stays at resorts in the North Carolina mountains and elsewhere that were reputed for their curative effects.) Later, the therapeutic benefits of nature would become a central focus of her volunteer activities, from co-founding Philadelphia’s Civic Parks Association² to pursuing conversations with European experts on behalf of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association.³



Brinton and Maria’s house at “Bear Tree Hill” (Later known as “Lonesomehurst”)

— National Museum of American History

But the couple's strong belief in the connection between environment and health could be a source of tension. Writing to Maria from Philadelphia in 1876, Brinton insists that "You must not return next Monday with Sophy. I repeat this. The physicians are imperative. You must stay longer." Another letter, posted from the hotel at Kittrell's Springs, indicates that he has given extensive thought to unhealthy drafts on railroad sleeping cars. He outlines specific sleeping arrangements that could minimize the danger if, after consulting their physician⁴, Maria goes forward with her plan to take Charlotte on a journey during his absence.

Brinton Coxe was forty years old when Charlotte, their first daughter, was born. Three other children would follow over the next eight years— Eliza Middleton, Mary Rebecca (called Polly) and Edmund James. Eckley and Sophia would remain childless, a circumstance which placed overt or unspoken pressure on the sons of the other Coxe brothers to follow in his vocational footsteps. A later Coxe descendant reflected these intergenerational expectations: "The heritage of land and the incentive to develop it were laid upon each father's son."⁵

The future of the daughters (Brinton and Maria's three being the majority) was less specifically envisioned, still understood in aristocratic circles to depend upon favorable matches.

¹ The very next day, Brinton writes to Maria again. Perhaps after reflecting on his previous letter, he adjusts his approach to her. "My own darling," he begins, and goes on to explain that the dullness he experiences in the north has nothing to do with "any person or thing Driftonian." Rather, it is because "Like a crescent, my center of gravity is outside of me... I love you very dearly, my beloved. You are very good to like an oldster like me."

² Noted in her 1933 obituary in the *Hazleton Plain Speaker*, which nonetheless identifies Maria in its headline as "Sister of the Angel of the Hard Coal Fields". A later article about her estate that was published in the *Mount Carmel Item* applies the title to Maria, completely absorbing her own benevolences into her sister's regional identity.

³ An 1897 note to Maria from the chief of the Division of Forestry at the U.S. Department of Agriculture conveys several letters of introduction to "gentlemen at the principal forestry schools" of Europe whom he believes to be "in a position to inform you on any subject you might be interested in."

⁴ Illustrative of the familial interconnections within Philadelphia society, the physician to be consulted on the question was Jacob Mendes Da Costa, the distinguished medical educator whose wife, Frederica Brinton, was Eckley and Brinton Coxe's cousin.

⁵ This observation ends the author's preface to a draft manuscript called *The Coxes of Drifton* by Anna Sophia Yarnall. This title has been crossed out on the cover page, replaced with *By Land Obsessed*. Because of family objections to certain of the author's conclusions and speculations, this work was ultimately recast as a 1981 novel, *The Clark Inheritance*. Despite these concerns, access to Yarnall's extensive research notes provides invaluable background on the family and the times.

4. The Children's Hour

Charlotte Coxe, known within her family by the baby-talk moniker “Totty”, was christened with the middle name “Drifton”— like the village. Brinton and Maria’s three other children would be similarly identified with the place. Since the mining towns on the Coxe lands were created in formerly unpopulated places, the brothers had the privilege of naming them. The selection of “Eckley” for another of the nearby mining towns was an obvious choice. Whether “Drifton” also referred to a person or place with family associations is long forgotten, but the naming of Charlotte, Eliza, Mary and Edmund in such a geographically connected manner cannot have been accidental. By the time the children were born, Brinton and Maria had come to view the place (or at least their woodland corner of it) in a certain romantic mist.¹

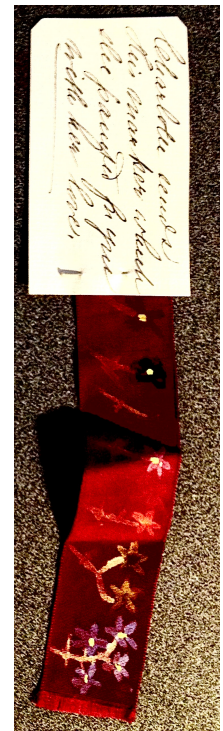
Letters between Brinton and Maria during the long development of Bear Tree Hill are among their most affectionate and reflect a genuine creative partnership. A long letter from Brinton in Drifton to Maria in Philadelphia goes into great detail about possible tree plantings, mentioning various species and their particular advantages. Brinton asks her preference about the selections and their spacing. Maria was to purchase the trees that she would like and have them shipped to Drifton for planting. After covering the subject in great detail, he reverts in an afterthought to a familiar concern, “Be particular about catching cold and do not expose yourself in looking up trees. Let the trees go to pot, rather than catch cold. Devotedly, Brinton.”

Unusual circumstances allow these personal glimpses into the thoughts, plans and worries of a couple beginning their married life over 150 years ago. The Coxe brothers were members and supporters of some of Philadelphia’s most significant cultural institutions. Recognizing the important place of their family in American history and its industrial development, several of their heirs donated large quantities of company documents to archives with which the family was affiliated, including the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the American Philosophical Society, and a separate collection at the Museum of American History in Washington. Each institution accepted them gratefully.

Boxes upon boxes remain, containing numerous folders into which years of highly personal correspondence and related ephemera were also swept up and preserved. As a result, business records of one of the great industrial ventures of the nineteenth century are curiously intermingled with candid notes between spouses, pictures sketched in idle moments, and treasured gifts crafted by little children. But for those circumstances, the story of Charlotte Drifton Coxe would be limited to the scant details in genealogies— as vacant as an empty picture frame in Salzburg. But, as it happens, a simple cloth bookmark painted by Charlotte Coxe during a stay with her Aunt Rebecca² resides in the same Locust Street archive as two invaluable drafts of the United States Constitution! “Aunt Becky” pinned a note to the flower-decorated strip of red silk, “Charlotte sends this marker which she painted for you with her love.”

Family members regularly traveled back and forth between Philadelphia and Drifton and also visited other locations for health purposes or just a fashionable respite. During these times of separation, letters were an important way to stay in touch. Charlotte’s growth from a child into a young adult can be traced through her childhood correspondence— which gradually matures in handwriting, formality and content.

Writing to her father at age eight, Charlotte informs him that “Baby (her brother Edmund) has eight teeth. He knows a great deal.” Apparently, the short note is directed to Brinton during one of his prescribed trips for recuperation. She adds,



“We all love you and are glad you are getting well. I wish you would come home... Do come home.” (Brinton’s concerns about household management would not be alleviated by Charlotte’s final bit of news— “Mama lost her purse and some Swedes brought it back to her.”)

The Coxe children were instructed by visiting tutors, supplemented by occasional “lessons” with their adult relatives. Charlotte’s letters specifically mention geography and dancing studies, and another note to her father is written in French— the painstaking script guided by lightly penciled horizontal lines. Addressing Brinton as “Mon Cher Papa,” she again dwells on his absence, “Je serais bien contente de vous revoir. Votre petite fille, Totty Coxe”. Brinton’s responses give some sense of his surroundings during these health-related trips. “The hotel is not quite full, but perhaps contains as many invalids as it ever did. Somebody is coughing constantly.” These daily encounters intensify his concern for the children at home— “I hope that Edmy will be very careful during this bad weather not to catch cold, because after pneumonia, the lungs are very sensitive.”

When their mother traveled, the children accompanied her in various combinations while those left behind were cared for by relatives and servants. Writing to Charlotte and Mary (called Polly) from Atlantic City in 1884, she reports that “Eliza seems to feel better and Edmund has the rosiest cheeks and is as happy as possible.”

While Brinton’s delicate health required extensive stays at distant locations, Maria seems to have addressed her children’s occasional illnesses by brief escapes to the shore— only sixty miles from downtown Philadelphia. An advertisement from the era claims that Atlantic City offers “three of the greatest health-giving elements known to science – sunshine, ozone, and recreation.” Maria apparently embraced this therapy for various family ailments. “I think the sea air will do Eliza a great deal of good.” Indicating that her return will depend on this anticipated progress, she tells Charlotte, “My darling, I miss you very much, but I hope soon to see you and dear little Polly. Your loving mother, M.M.C.”

Within a few years, the Coxe daughters had gained more autonomy, sometimes traveling with another relative or adult companion. Writing to her mother in the city, Charlotte narrates the arrival of the three sisters at the train station in Drifton for a winter holiday. There is a sense of carefree independence in her words. “The ground is white with snow. Eliza, Polly, and I had such a delightful drive in Aunt Becky’s sleigh.”

For one glorious night, any deleterious effect of the wintry air went unmentioned...

¹ To recapture some of this aura, it is useful to read the manuscript memoir of the Coxe family by Helen Weatherly, which is retained among the research papers of James Bohning at Lehigh University. Recalling her first impressions of Drifton as a child, Weatherly says “The trees were masses of red, scarlet and gold, the air was crisp and clear. the sky was very blue and there was always the delicious fragrance of hearth fires...”

² Rebecca and Anna Coxe were unmarried twin sisters of the five Coxe brothers— Brinton, Alexander, Eckley, Henry and Charles. All were the children of Judge Charles Sidney Coxe and Anna Maria Brinton. Anna Coxe died in 1884; Rebecca would live until 1910. She had a home in Drifton and lived directly across Spruce Street from Maria and her family in Philadelphia, interacting frequently.

5. Branching Out

From an early age, Charlotte showed an interest in the arts. While under the care of Aunt Becky, she wrote at length about an afternoon at “the pictures”. “The boar’s head was very good,” she confidently observed. “The picture did not have any name to it. It was painted by Miss Marion Lea. It was one of the best.” The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts had pioneered in accepting female students and played a significant role in the availability of professional credentials to women artists. Young Charlotte took special note that their work showed well in the galleries.

The emergence of Philadelphia as an attractive American center for women artists also meant that they frequently interacted with the city’s prominent families and supplemented their income through those connections. Within a few years, Charlotte was taking drawing lessons from Rebecca Newbold Van Trump, who had recently returned to the city after successfully establishing herself in the art world of Paris. And Cecelia Beaux’s poignant portrait of little Edmund Coxe still resides in the collection of the Academy.



Edmund Coxe by Cecelia Beaux —PAFA

But Charlotte’s attention soon turned with greater enthusiasm toward the performing arts—and particularly theater. There is a cluster of letters from Charlotte begging her mother for permission to see the professional theater troupes who appeared on Philadelphia’s nearby Broad Street. She was particularly excited by the return of Edwin Booth (the more dramatically gifted brother of Lincoln’s assassin) who performed to throngs of admirers for many years with his long-time associate Lawrence Barrett. Charlotte appears to have returned for multiple performances of the troupe’s repertory— from Sheridan’s *The Rivals* to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*, although she reports with disappointment that “Mary Anderson is not acting this year.”

This interest continued to grow during a “finishing” year as a boarding student in nearby Chestnut Hill. The Coxe’s choice for this year was Mrs. Walter D. Comegys and Miss Bell’s School for Young Ladies— an establishment “possessing all of the advantages which Philadelphia affords” while offering a location noted for its “extreme healthfulness and entire freedom from all malarial influences.” Charlotte’s uncle Eckley B. Coxe was among the prominent Philadelphians listed as references for the start-up school, along with several college presidents and the Episcopal Bishop of Pennsylvania. The founders were a pair of Tennessee sisters, whose social upbringing had much in common with that of their upper class Philadelphia clientele. Much of the female faculty was recruited from New England.

The year in Chestnut Hill may have been arranged in an effort to strengthen Charlotte’s social confidence through a different and more stimulating environment. Aunt Becky had watched her development with a keen eye for many years— reporting in some of her earliest letters to Maria the signs of her little niece’s acute perceptiveness:

I found Totty down in the library, as the front nursery was being aired and swept. She was very glad to see me and immediately observed that I was wearing different earrings from those she has seen me wearing recently. I suppose they attracted her because they are pansies. You know how fond she is of flowers.

But as time went on and all of the Coxe children matured, Aunt Becky felt moved to share more serious observations. After thoughts about the most beneficial arrangements for Charlotte's music lessons, she continues:

I am sorry to hear of Charlotte walking so far out Broad Street alone, but I do not think it is wise to find too much fault with her. She has a peculiar disposition and I am afraid she is very easily discouraged. She needs companionship and employment and very kind and considerate advice. She is no longer a child, but she does not yet feel able for the responsibilities of life. It strikes me, it would be good for you and for her, to confide in you and tell you what are her desires. I have observed that she has been very much alone in Drifton. Eliza and Polly are so much to each other that Charlotte does not seek their companionship, and you have had so much anxiety and sorrow that she has hesitated to add to your troubles. Charlotte is very sensitive and she appreciates any personal thoughtfulness. Dearest Maria, please excuse my writing to you in this way about your own child, but sometimes one out of your immediate home circle can see what is not observed there. You know how dear all of my nieces and nephews are to me and if I can do anything to help them I am impelled to do so..."

There is a single report card from the school in Chestnut Hill among Maria's papers, indicating satisfactory progress, but noting that Charlotte needed to show "greater effort to speak French". A personal note to Maria from Mrs. Comegys says that she is "not quite certain how Charlotte feels about school. Much of the time, she seems very cheerful, at others is evidently a little homesick— I should say very homesick— but she is very brave about it. I think the discipline of school will be of service to her although it is difficult for her to conform..." She says that Charlotte is eager to join the dancing class and asks for Maria's approval.

Board and tuition at Mrs. Comegys and Miss Bell's School was \$600 per year, with additional fees for "seats at church, piano use and laundry."¹ Charlotte tolerated the standard curriculum which included Latin, French and German language studies. But her interest was clearly piqued by other activities like the recently introduced *Delsarte System of Expression*— an innovation which would profoundly influence the development of American modern dance. It is uncertain how closely the daily program at Mrs. Comegys' tracked with Francois Delsarte's theories on the interplay of the emotions and the body, but Charlotte's teacher made an immediate impression on the new boarder: "She jumps around like a grasshopper!"

Since students were required to write home three times per week— on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays— we have Charlotte's point of view on many aspects of the experience— with frequent apologies for her hasty handwriting and spelling. Because her father was fluent in German through his studies abroad, it is likely that she arrived in Chestnut Hill with considerable proficiency. Whatever the reason, she mentions that "I am to be in a class by myself in German". As for her other classes, "The drawing I like very much."

Very brief glimpses of school life are also recorded in these pages. There is a girl from the south who is teased for her dancing. "All the girls make her do it and laugh at her, which is such a shame." She also observes that "There is also a girl here who is in love with another. She goes on in just the same way Polly does with Elsie. It is such fun to see these two." And after years of lessons with older family members and their peers, "I have never seen such

young teachers!” There are reports on the fixed daily schedule and some vivid images of the “Springside” girls in public. “I went to church this morning with the other girls, two and two.”

Charlotte availed herself of transportation offered by another relative, Aunt Lizzie, to continue attending Philadelphia theater performances. On one such afternoon, she saw the Stuart Bobson company in *She Stoops to Conquer*, promptly returning to Chestnut Hill after the matinee with her slightly older cousin— known simply in the family as “Eckley Junior”. ²

¹ *Springside School 1879-1979: One Hundred Years of Tradition and Change*, p. 6. “The course of study includes the fundamental and higher branches of a thorough English education, the Latin and French languages being also well taught. Advanced classes in Literature, Mathematics, Latin and Greek under able Professors. Special attention paid to the physical well-being of pupils.”

² The son of Charles and Elizabeth Sinkler Coxe was named Eckley B. Coxe in honor of his distinguished uncle. Elizabeth Sinkler Coxe (Aunt Lizzie) was another example of the unusual connections between the north and south in Philadelphia society. Born at Belvidere Plantation in South Carolina, she married Charles Coxe— the youngest of the five Coxe brothers and a former Union army major. Interestingly, this marriage repeated, with a gender reversal, the pattern of the previous generation when Elizabeth’s Philadelphia-born mother Emily Wharton had married South Carolina cotton planter Charles Sinkler.

6. Other Shores

Charlotte Coxe was shuttled between several fashionable blocks of Philadelphia and remote Drifton during much of her childhood and youth. But she was well aware of the world beyond those familiar neighborhoods. During her father's absences at Carolina health resorts, Charlotte paid close attention to his location and imagined the surroundings. ("I cannot find Kitrell on the map," she wrote with frustrated interest.) She was also in regular contact with relatives who summered in the fashionable island enclaves of Jamestown and Newport, Rhode Island—occasionally joining them for short visits and taking in the sights.

Cousin Attie took us all over to Newport yesterday noon in her new carriage. It was great fun watching the "fine people" driving up and down the avenue.

All of Brinton Coxe's brothers and sisters had the financial means for world travel. Shortly after Brinton and Maria's wedding in October of 1872, the newlyweds stood on the Jersey City wharf waving farewell to a voyaging party of Coxe siblings. The group included Rebecca, Anna, and Charles. In late November, as Brinton and Maria concentrated on setting up their household, Rebecca sent a lengthy letter from Cairo, describing the city for those at home who relied on her correspondence to experience the exotic destination vicariously:

The climate of Egypt is perfectly delicious at this season. We can wear summer dresses; at the same time can be comfortable in silks. We went to the Mosque of Mehmet Ali the other day— It is extremely handsome. The outside is all white alabaster and the inside yellow alabaster. The floor is covered with Turkish rugs. Numerous lanterns and chandeliers hang all around, which must produce a most brilliant effect when lighted... We have only seen the pyramids in the distance as yet.

Rebecca notes that "Charley" likes the climate very much, although he requires rest after the "hard and long journey to get here". Everyone in the party seems encouraged that he is recovering from whatever condition had required the consultation of a physician in Paris. At the time of Rebecca's letter, no one expected that Charles Coxe would die in Cairo— leaving Elizabeth Sinkler Coxe a widow at age 30— with an infant son.

Rebecca and Anna would continue to travel abroad, and they made a special effort to share their international experiences as Brinton and Maria's family grew. Seven years after the Egyptian tour, Anna ("Aunt Nanna") wrote to Charlotte, Eliza and Polly ("my dear little nieces") from Brussels, vividly narrating the festivities associated with the fiftieth year of Belgian Independence. She knew that she could rely on Brinton and Maria to supply the girls with the necessary historical background. "Papa and Mamma can tell you about it."

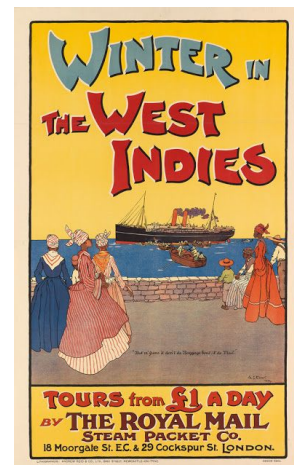
Over time, Elizabeth Sinkler Coxe would become the most consistent and intrepid world traveler among all the Coxes. As her son "Eckley Junior" grew up, he showed a particular interest in the distant land where his father had unexpectedly died. Mother and son developed what Anne LeClercq has called "a lifelong passion for travel in each other's company" to places including Cairo and Luxor, as well as Algiers and many capitals of Europe.¹ Lizzie also seems to have played the role of travel advisor to Maria and her family as they began to explore on their own after Brinton's death:

Lizzie Coxe, who met us at Cannes in February encouraged me to venture on the tour in Italy. Without her, I never would have had the courage.

A cruise to the West Indies on the steamship Ohio did nothing to ease Maria's cautious approach to travel. The newspapers listed numerous Philadelphians embarking on the journey

— including “Mrs. Brinton Coxe and maid” along with Charlotte and Edmund. Travel posters of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company glamorized this mid-winter getaway, but a daily journal kept by 14-year-old Edmund fills in details. Rough water on the outbound segment kept a “wobbly” Edmund below deck for two days— causing his mother to send the doctor to his cabin. (Aunt Rebecca cabled a reassuring message to Maria about Eliza and Polly at home: “Girls with me well.”) To pass boring days on the open sea, the siblings played bean bags and shuffleboard on deck— using ad hoc game sets crafted by the ship’s carpenter.

After a stop in Puerto Rico, two other scheduled islands refused admission to the steamer passengers without a lengthy quarantine. And Edmund was on deck when a St. Kitts official boarded the ship to inform the captain that there was a “negro revolt” on shore and that forty men had been shot the day before. “When we heard that, we got up anchor.”³



Scattered among these calamities, however, are descriptions of carriage rides through “primeval” forests, charming markets and exotic creatures. Edmund has his own preoccupations which include purchasing hummingbird specimens (sometimes illicitly), taking photographs with two different cameras, and obtaining stamps from each Caribbean post office for a friend at home. The crew seems to have compensated for the frequently adjusted itinerary by arranging a race to Trinidad with another steamer— winning in a dramatic finish.

Edmund does not mention his sister by name until the last page of his account when, in Trinidad, “Charlotte, Miss Harris and I” went off by train to “a coolie village” of Chinese laborers recruited for the sugar plantations. Although Edmund’s account ends abruptly in Trinidad, a later note indicates that the family members traveled on to Venezuela, Jamaica and Cuba before returning to Philadelphia. The ship’s log for the cruise offers an outsider’s view of the traveling party:

Mrs. Brinton Coxe, Widow
Edmund Coxe, Student
Miss Charlotte Coxe, Spinster

¹These travels blended seamlessly with Eckley B. Coxe, Jr.’s career development as an archaeologist and his eventual underwriting of major Egyptian expeditions and museum facilities of the University of Pennsylvania.

² Unsurprisingly, Maria plans the family’s continued travel through Italy with attention to information from doctors and friends concerning healthful climatic locations— especially for young Edmund. Recognizing how much of her letter from Europe had been devoted to health matters, she jests “I should be thankful to settle in a hospital if it were not for the other sick people. A nice little private sanitarium is what we need!” At the Grand Hotel in Rome, which is “said to be better for health,” she is comforted by the Fountain of Acqua Felice, whose water can be heard rushing all night below their window. “It is an reproach to our modern civilization that the Romans cared so much more than we do for an abundance of pure water.”

³ A telegram received by a member of the British parliament on the exact day of the Ohio’s arrival in St. Kitts confirms the labor riot, but mentions only two fatalities. Whether the warning to the ship’s captain was alarmist or the official report to the legislator was deliberately understated is unknown.

7. Stage Struck

“Cousin Attie” was Harriet Hare McClellan.

Another Coxe relative who took a special interest in Charlotte, she brought a broad worldview and a creative flair to the task. The connection between the Coxes and McClellans lay several generations in the past; it suffices to note that the civil war general and later governor of New Jersey was George *Brinton* McClellan.

“Cousins Attie and George are very good to me,” Charlotte wrote to her mother on arriving in Jamestown, Rhode Island for the first time. “The cottage is very pretty and is situated on the water’s edge and every room has a sea view.” For Harriet McClellan, summering on the New England shore was a return to familiar terrain. Born in Newport, she met there and married Philadelphia physician and noted anatomical illustrator George McClellan, a nephew of the general.

Although it was really George with whom Charlotte shared a family relationship, she seems to have deeply bonded with Harriet over books and plays. She was only too happy to extend the “cousin” designation to the occasional novelist and playwright who had invited her to share their seaside place. While Charlotte regretted that she had not packed some of her favorite books into her trunk, she may have used her time to advantage by exploring ideas with Harriet. In one letter to her mother, Charlotte mentions that “Cousin Attie is going to have a play,” involving “several other people on the island who act well.” A telling bit of reassurance follows:

Please do not make yourself uneasy, I am not going to be in the play— I see no reason for you to be so nervous— at least from this quarter you have nothing at all which can make you feel unhappy. With much love I am yours affectionately, Charlotte.

But several months later, Charlotte would appear at the Broad Street Theatre in a charity production directed by Cousin Attie. In the two-part program, Charlotte played Margaret Beauchamp in *The Dowager Duchess*¹, and also performed the role of the Queen of Diamonds in a scene from *Alice in Wonderland* which followed. Charlotte’s character in the opening two-act comedy was a challenging first role, involving a great deal of fast-paced banter for which a sense of comic timing was important.

Charlotte’s “Margaret” was onstage at the opening curtain, engaged in a conversation with Lady Bloomer that explained the situation of the play. A group of friends have just abandoned their enjoyable “private theatricals” because of the expected arrival of a wealthy widow, who would view their leisure pursuit as frivolous. Lady Bloomer nonetheless considers it a necessity to receive the dowager graciously, explaining that “she is very rich, has no children...” to which Margaret responds knowingly, “You are quite right (sighing). It is a sad necessity.”

A reporter for *The Philadelphia Times* social page treated the event generously¹, although she struggled to characterize the movements of the large cast in the second part of the program, which Harriet had created for the occasion:

The costumes of the various cards were artistic. At the conclusion of the game, the persons representing the remainder of the euchre pack came on the stage and gave a dance, closing on a tableau of all the cards, apparently shuffled for a new deal.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* also pronounced the performances “quite credible”.

Although the plays were seen in Philadelphia on only two evenings, Margaret's fictional society of friends built around theatrical activity may have made an impression on Charlotte. Aunt Lizzie and Eckley Junior had recently constructed a second home in Drifton— an extraordinary 25-room mansion that shared a hilltop location with the house still occupied by Maria and her four children. The new house, called “Windy Hill”, invited stark comparisons with the dark wooden structure across the road. (Indeed, the original name of Brinton and Maria's place was soon forgotten. Down to the present day, it is remembered instead as “Lonesomehurst”.) But Lizzie and Eckley Junior's expansive new summer house offered a perfect place for a society of creative young friends to find an outlet.

In addition to its terraced formal garden, Windy Hill featured a tennis court and an indoor bowling alley. There, using a stage-like platform and a closet large enough to store costume pieces, Charlotte, Eliza, Polly, Edmund and Eckley “invented charades by the dozens”. By one account, the group even arranged an early example of immersive theater— staging a train robbery when a group of Philadelphia guests approached Drifton in the single parlor car of the Coxe family's proprietary railroad, the Delaware, Susquehanna & Schuylkill. Whether or not the realism of the little drama actually startled the guests (as it was later remembered), the story underscores the inventive ways that five young cousins and neighbors overcame the boredom of summer life in the Pennsylvania coal country.³

When at home in the city, Charlotte often participated in the theater “box parties” offered by the Coxe's network of relatives and friends. Sponsors would purchase an entire set of advantageously situated box seats at one of the city's numerous performance venues and issue invitations. Charlotte and Cousin Attie are named in the newspaper report on such a party during the 1896 appearance by Edward H. Southern in *An Enemy to the King*— billed as “an original romantic drama”. Just two weeks after Prince Luigi's momentous visit on Spruce Street, Charlotte's attention had returned to royalty of the stage.

For a young woman whose everyday persona was regarded as unusually “sensitive” and a bit “peculiar”, such outings provided a socially acceptable way to indulge her own sense of identity. A Philadelphia appearance by Ziegfeld protégé Anna Held made a particular impression. Shortly after the publication of a new publicity photograph of the actress (“as lovely, shapely and chic as ever” according to the *Inquirer*) Charlotte hurried to the Chestnut Street studio of Gilbert & Bacon where she struck an identical, costumed pose for the camera.

Among photographs of Charlotte, it is the most unselfconsciously exuberant...

Anna
Held



Charlotte
Coxe



¹ If Charlotte looked inside the front cover of the Acting Edition of the play, she may have seen the notation that the 1857 cast at Burton's Theatre included "Barrett" in the role of Edgar Beauchamp, the brother of her character. This note is consistent with a detail recorded in the biography of William Barrett that the young actor launched his New York career with a very brief engagement at Burton's in that year.

² The Broad Street Theatre was an impressive place to perform. It had been constructed twenty years earlier for the entertainment of crowds expected for the Centennial Exposition. Originally known as Kiralfy's Alhambra Palace, it had colorful interior decoration suggesting its Spanish namesake. In the years since its construction, it had hosted many national and international theatrical luminaries.

³ Yarnall manuscript, pp. 11, 105.

8. A Father's Legacy

Even when all was well in Jamestown, Charlotte knew that her mother had reasons for unhappiness at home.

Despite the stresses and frequent separation that characterized Maria's marriage to Brinton, she was shattered by his death and cherished the many letters of condolence that she received. His death was attributed to chronic tuberculosis— a diagnosis that was widespread and still imperfectly understood during much of their lives together. His death came just short of their twentieth anniversary, when she was still only 44 years old.

Among the pile of letters, Maria tucked a rather melancholy poem titled "The Dead-Tryst", imagining the nighttime return of a deceased lover. Conjuring an impassioned seaside meeting, Irish poet Katharine Tynan ends with:

Oh wherefore, darling, darling, did you break my dull content,
And why did you come but to go?

For Maria, the lines may have encapsulated her entire marriage experience, from its mildly coercive beginning to its premature ending, leaving her with unsought complexities. The signs of Brinton's presence remained all around her. There were his 3,000 law books, for which a personal library had not progressed beyond a fond architectural drawing.¹ And there was the half-completed manuscript of his *Essay on Judicial Power and Unconstitutional Legislation*..

From Italy, she drafted a lengthy letter to their Philadelphia physician, deftly summarizing critical opinions on the project from scholars at Brown and Columbia Universities and sharing her view that favorable reception of Brinton's ideas had been as important to him as the sympathetic medical care that he received:

Especially must he have been gratified by interest shown in the book of which he spoke to very few of his friends. I know Brinton wished his book to live after he had passed from this world, to be a monument and something of which his children might be proud, and all these praises bestowed on it will have repaid him for the years of patient research and profound thought to complete the work in spite of weakness and pain..."

When Maria's letter drifted into speculation on whether he would somehow be conscious in the afterlife of efforts to see the book through to publication, she stopped abruptly and crossed through the paragraph. But the abandoned letter shows the earnestness of her advocacy for the printing of the *Essay*, which would occur one year later with substantial editorial assistance.

Maria viewed herself as the primary advocate for Brinton's legacy, recognizing that her husband's less entrepreneurial pursuits had caused him to be regarded as something of a minor appendix to the dynamic Coxe Brothers corporation. Anna Wharton Smith was currently soliciting subscribers for her *Genealogy of the Fisher Family*, and Maria sought help from her brother George Fisher to make certain that she and her husband would be represented in a full and balanced manner. But George was skeptical about such volumes:

I take little interest in genealogical records got up as Miss Smith intends to get up hers. And I do not want to buy her work. The trouble with such books is that they are invariably prepared by friends of the subjects, and are biased if not untrue.

The final publication could not have pleased Maria. The listing for her sister notes Sophia's marriage to Eckley B. Coxe, followed by three pages of laudatory prose about Eckley's

many scientific, business and civic accomplishments. It concludes with admiring quotes from associates about his upstanding character and winning personal charm. The listing for Maria records the learned societies headed by her husband and includes the various scholarly appraisals of Brinton's book, but it exhausts its praise at the 41st line.

There were more immediate and practical concerns. Brinton's will left the Drifton house and a third of his estate to Maria, with the greater part placed in trust for the four children. The expense of operating two houses and the household staff connected with them needed to be reconsidered. George Fisher, who also served as Maria's financial advisor, spelled out the situation:

Charlotte certainly should give you, as long as she is unmarried and lives with you, a very large portion of her income, retaining what is sufficient for clothing and pocket money. If she doesn't do this, the others may not want to do this, and you will have to alter your whole style of living and move into a smaller house in Philadelphia.

On the one hand, Maria had a strong personal interest in the social success and subsequent marriages of her daughters, but her relationship to them had suddenly changed to one of mutual dependence. In a letter to his brothers, Brinton had only recently summarized the increasing needs of the household as his children reached maturity:

My daughters are becoming women. One is old enough to marry and another will be so before the end of next year. Thus, the expected entrance of two daughters into society, and their mother's intentions related thereto, cause me grave anxiety. She intends that they shall enter society prepared to receive matrimonial attentions. She has begun to put a pressure upon me to say what I will do in the matter of outfits, allowances and the like. To be equal to my new responsibilities, I need all my resources.

Brinton was proposing a fundamental change in his connection to Coxe Brothers, ending the reinvestment of his income in the firm and withdrawing his portion of the capital. With his customary formality, he concluded the request,

Circumstances over which neither you or I have control make it my duty to my wife and children to write you this letter. It is with no diminished affection that I sign myself,

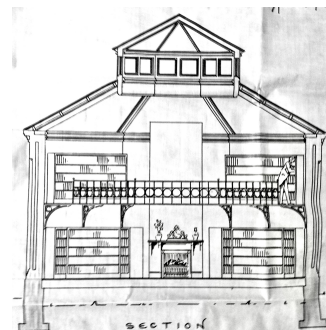
Your affectionate brother, Brinton Coxe

However, he did not live to see the next phase of the girls' lives. And any neatly imagined schedule of their sequential departure from home would prove elusive. Two, three, four years later, there were no marriage proposals. And Maria was writing to her friend Emily:

I hear that Polly is a great success, though Charlotte is rather out of it— all since the 3rd Coxe girl has appeared— I don't quite like Charlotte's ways and do hope she will not be so foolish as to become too dashing in the effort to keep herself prominent.

¹Edmund later contributed his father's books to the Harvard Law Library, the largest and most valuable donation of books to the collection up to that time.

Right: Proposed design of a private library for Brinton Coxe (unbuilt).



9. A Taste of Freedom

Charlotte Coxe was comfortable with the McClellans, and they enjoyed her company.

As Charlotte's taste for exploration grew, it was often in their company. One Atlantic crossing, on the steamship *New York* included an interesting shipmate— the dancer Lottie Collins, who had variously entertained or scandalized American audiences with her vigorous rendition of “Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay”. While Maria would have hustled her family to a remote corner of the deck if Lottie appeared, Cousin Attie would have been more inclined to seek an introduction to the performer, her husband and child— doubtless advising Charlotte to omit the encounter from her letters home.

The refined tastes of the old South Carolina and Philadelphia aristocracy were far removed from popular music hall fare. Indeed, Maria Coxe was descended from Carolinians who considered it their responsibility to “rescue elitism from fashion and frivolity.”¹ Remnants of this attitude sometimes appear in Maria's discussion of other matters. Writing to Emily Hare, the hereditary Episcopalian mentions that some friends have recently joined the Salvation Army, “which tries to bring religion down to the level of the masses instead of endeavoring to raise them up to it”. From Maria's perspective, this was equivalent to authors of children's books “who write with bad grammar such as they are supposed to talk— a needless degradation.”

Whether on Broad Street or journeying through Europe, Cousin Attie was inclined to expose Charlotte to a wider range of experiences and help her to develop her own cultural sensibilities. In June 1896, the Philadelphia Times announced that “Mrs. Brinton Coxe and the Misses Coxe are at the Windsor, Atlantic City; Miss Charlotte Coxe will sail on Saturday for Europe.”

Rather than heading north for the usual summer in Drifton, it was a highly meaningful breaking away from the rest of her family— with Cousin Attie gently in the background of her travels. During a visit to the English Lake Country, she seems delighted by a happenstance discovery:

We walked along the road, not knowing exactly what to do, and joined several country farmers with their wives. Following these people, we came to a place walled very high; voices were heard to proceed from it. Curiosity getting the better of us, we forthwith went in, paying one shilling each! When once in, we found to our great astonishment that it was a “Gala,” in other words, a “county fair”. All the maids and valets were dressed in their best clothes. There were a series of races which were most amusing. There was also dancing, Cousin Attie said it was the “Old Spanish Waltz”. We were standing on the hill looking down on the people of whom there were several thousand. The mountains in the far distance formed a most pleasing and delightful picture and a little nearer, washing at the grounds where the “Gala” was taking place lay Windermere.

In Attie's company, she seems to take extraordinary notice of her surroundings and selects her words more carefully than in the past to convey what she has seen. Deliberately returning across the lake at the slow pace of a rowboat she takes in more details:

The lights and shadows cast by the sun on the mountains, and the beautiful little green islands we passed were all reflected on the water, as was also a very picturesque castle on the border of the Lake that might be inhabited by fairies...

Of course, she could switch from this ethereal perspective quickly when writing separately to her brother— in less precisely formed script:

Poor dear Edmund, I have just received Mamma's letter this evening telling me about your narrow escape! I hope by now you are entirely recovered from the fall. What an awful imp you are, always getting yourself into scrapes and frightening the family to death!

Remembering his specimen collecting in the West Indies, she quizzes Edmund:

What would you like me to send you— any dead rats or skins of cats or gull's eggs in a paper? I might send you some human skin which was found in Worcester Cathedral. We saw it in the Chapter House of that cathedral...² Your affectionate sister, Spot.

The tour wound its way through English cities and country spas— taking in sights, theater, galleries and the current London spectacle, Imre Karalfy's "India". She is regularly served breakfast in bed and attentive hoteliers forward arriving letters on to the next destination. In addition to Attie, she seems to be in the company of a seldom mentioned maid or chaperone, whose wages she receives from home.

With surprising frequency, Charlotte crosses paths with family friends and relatives from Philadelphia— including her former schoolmistress, Miss Bell. At times, Charlotte seems suspicious that these sightings are more than coincidental:



John Newbold paid us a visit yesterday afternoon. I really think it was very kind of him to come as he was busy making arrangements for his party and had only landed the day before. He thought we were very comfortable and there was not the slightest thing to worry you.

Writing from abroad, Charlotte assumed the tones of a seasoned traveler, offering to make purchases for her sister Eliza while in Paris. After she had sailed back to Philadelphia, Maria hosted a surprise party in her honor. Both the *Times* and *Inquirer* made mention of the occasion, noting that Charlotte had "recently returned from a four months' European trip".

But Charlotte already had declared a new phase of her life before parting from the family in Atlantic City. At Lincoln Myers' "Artistic Photography Studio" at New York Avenue on the ocean front, she sat for a portrait amid an array of mirrors. The result was an enigmatic picture of a young woman who took a certain pleasure in confounding the expectations of the society pages.

¹ Kilbride, *An American Aristocracy: Southern Planters in Antebellum Philadelphia*, p. 13.

² This oddity still resides at the Chapter House at Worcester, associated with the legend of a vanquished and flayed Viking. “Unsurprisingly, it is a piece of local history that tends to stay in the mind when the finer points of church architecture are long forgotten.”

10. Back in Society

Returning from Europe, Charlotte may have viewed the predictable social rounds of Philadelphia with greater detachment. Her youngest sister Polly was now among the featured debutantes— whose appearances and movements were followed by Philadelphians with the enthusiasm of a spectator sport. Elaborate receptions, dinners, balls, and parties followed one upon another. But even for those entering this whirl of activity for the first time, it could be wearing. While returning a borrowed book, one of Charlotte's cousins had given her frank impression of the scene:

I recollect your telling me about the book at Drifton, and shall read it with great pleasure when I shall find a few minutes in this busy society life which seems to me to consist of receiving and writing invitations.

An article from the *Inquirer* is typical of the assessments that appeared each year:

By the time the season is ended it is very likely that society people in general will pronounce it a "debutante's season". Not for many years has there been such a dazzling array of beautiful buds brought out to add to the brilliancy of the social bower and affairs given in their honor have been in the majority. Some of Philadelphia's oldest, richest and most aristocratic families have contributed their younger daughters to the ranks of fashion and most of these young recruits have been girls of great beauty and many accomplishments.

For Polly, it generated excitement. Apparently, she was judged a "great success" in crossing the social threshold. But, given the hyperbole heaped upon these newest entrants, it is hard to imagine that Charlotte remained an enthusiastic participant. She was less frequently named at lavish balls in the Art Club or Horticultural Hall, or among invited luncheon guests at the Stratford Hotel. But all three of the "Misses Coxe" still made an impression at some memorable events:

The dinner-dance given by Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Van Rensselaer last Friday was one of the smartest affairs of the season. The guests went out to their country place at Camp Hill in a special train, returning at midnight. The lawns were beautifully decorated for the event. Dinner was served in the new hall which had just been added to the house. Among those who attended were: Miss Charlotte Coxe, Miss Eliza Middleton Coxe, Miss Mary Rebecca Coxe...

Charlotte also took part when Eckley Junior and his mother (Aunt Lizzie) brought their entertaining skills to the city. As always, Charlotte felt comfortable in the company of Young Eck, whose status as a "confirmed bachelor" was becoming more apparent. He and his mother gave the event a tradition-breaking feel, as reported in unusual detail by the *Inquirer*:

YOUNGER SET ATTENDS Electric Effects Introduced

...The decorations were more elaborate than any of the affairs held in the gallery of the club this season, the predominating colors being pink and white. Eighteen colonial columns were placed against the walls of the room and were surmounted with pink baskets, tied with white satin ribbons and filled with new Victor carnations. Across the face of each column was a tendril of asparagus vine and between the pillars and large mirrors were ropes of asparagus vine with yellow roses entwined.

Bay trees, palms, pink azaleas and accacias flanked the mirrors and furnished the wall of decorations for the orchestra. Small incandescent lights were placed in the accacias and azaleas, imparting a richness to the wealth of color. The chandelier was adorned with wild smilax and the globes had pink shades. The hallway and the supper room were also exquisitely decorated in keeping with the dance room...

Aunt Lizzie was “assisted in receiving by the Misses Coxe”. In a single evening, Eckley and his three cousins made their most attention-grabbing appearances since the “great train robbery” in Drifton.

All of the sisters returned three years later when Eckley and his mother (who by then were keeping adjacent city homes at 1604 and 1614 Locust Street) hosted one of Philadelphia’s first dinner dances of the new millenium at his residence, with favors of “valentines, mandolins, flowers and letters” and an orchestra playing in the conservatory.

Just why the Coxe girls deviated from the general norm of moving quickly from society introduction to engagement and marriage is not an easy question to settle. At the head of the line of the “Misses Coxe,” Charlotte had a generally acknowledged social deficit, but the “peculiar disposition” that her aunt had observed resists definition from the distance of 125 years. By today’s standards, would it be assigned a particular diagnosis? Perhaps. Or she simply may have lived at the edge of 19th century norms of decorum. In family photographs, she was always the sibling with a strand of hair distinctly out of place, or leaning at an awkward angle in a pairing that called attention to Eliza’s natural elegance.



Whatever the case, the 1900 Census still recorded Maria at 1515 Spruce Strfeet with her 26, 24 and 23-year-old daughters and three servants. Edmund was now completing studies at Harvard— having opted to abandon his naturalist leanings to follow the Coxe legacy vocation of engineering. Eliza was “bent on going to the Academy of Fine Arts” in the fall and no longer inclined to spend time in Drifton. As Maria lamented concerning the girls’ growing orientation toward city life:

It is rather hard that my daughters hate Drifton so, because we have the most delightful weather all through October and November and Philadelphia gets more detestable every year. If it were not for my family and friends and a certain duty I feel to the place, I should be tempted to give up the house there altogether.

Charlotte began to occupy more of her time in Philadelphia with civic involvements—sometimes drawn into activities spearheaded by Harriet McClellan, from the Morris Animal Refuge to the founding chapter of the Colonial Dames of America.¹ Charlotte sometimes took part in historical tableaux presentations in which current Philadelphians recreated scenes from the lives of their colonial ancestors. A surviving letter from Maria lays out her plan for Charlotte to portray her ancestor Anne Willing “who was a belle and decidedly clever young woman” as she bid farewell to Colonel Henry Bouquet. The Swiss mercenary was departing Philadelphia for the assault on Fort Duquesne in the French and Indian War.²

in addition to their well-established familial roots, Charlotte and the other members of the next Coxe generation were well aware of the personal wealth that would eventually accrue to them, based on a formula established in the will of their childless uncle Eckley B. Coxe (senior). He provided that his substantial holdings in the Coxe mining operation would ultimately pass to the sons and daughters of his four brothers, one fourth to the descendants of each— Brinton, Alexander, Henry and Charles.

¹Indeed, Charlotte is named in the Congressional Proceedings of the Fifty-Fourth Congress as a petitioner against the federal chartering of a different, but similarly named genealogy-based association. The president of the petitioning Philadelphia group is Harriet McClellan. Family history was particularly important in Philadelphia society, as suggested by Mark Twain’s observation: “In Boston they ask, how much does he know? In New York, how much is he worth? In Philadelphia, who were his parents?”

²This scene— to be staged like a framed picture— was to be presented before the New York membership of the Colonial Dames, through an arrangement by Harriet McClellan. Maria asks Emily Hare to solicit her son for the role of the Colonel. She has viewed their portraits at Alverthorpe and thinks that Charlotte somewhat resembles Anne Willing “who has curly dark hair and a bright complexion”. As for the officer, she describes details of his 18th century British uniform. “No one need know that Col. Bouquet was an ugly man!”



Maria Middleton Fisher Coxe and Her Family in Philadelphia
 Mary Rebecca (Polly), Maria, Charlotte, Edmund, Eliza



Charlotte Drifton Coxe

11. THE EARTH SHAKES

HAZELTON, Pa., Oct. 28 Companies I and L, now stationed at the old Lehigh Valley shops building in this city will probably be transferred to Drifton, near Coxe Brothers & Co. workings within the next few days. The workmen of Coxe Brothers & Co. are still on strike, and fearing trouble when an attempt is made to operate its colliery with non-union men, the firm has asked for troops. It is reported that Colonel Bowman, of the First Regiment, will send the two companies mentioned to Drifton.

Change was in the air in the first years of the twentieth century. The energy-rich carbon deposits under the northeastern Pennsylvania countryside had helped fuel remarkable industrial expansion over the decades since the Civil War. And the vision and ingenuity of the Coxe family to exploit their landholdings and develop the mines played a major role. But even with the benevolent gestures¹ of the Coxes toward their workforce, inequities were apparent and calls for change became more frequent and vehement.

For Maria Coxe, it was difficult to see the efforts of union organizers as anything but an unwelcome intrusion into a family business that provided adequately and generously enough for its laborers. As she wrote to Emily Hare,

The majority of the miners in this coal region were doing well and did not wish to strike. Of the men at Drifton, only 4 percent belonged to the "United Mine Workers" and they had no grievances and did not wish to strike, but this man Mitchell determined that they should and has used every means to intimidate the unfortunate men.

The work stoppage in the anthracite coal fields now remembered as the "Great Strike" was called by John Mitchell, president of the recently organized United Mine Workers of America on May 12th, 1902 and would last for nearly six months— ultimately resolved by the intervention of President Theodore Roosevelt and the agreement of both sides to accept the arbitration of a specially appointed Anthracite Coal Strike Commission.

In the end, the workers achieved a 10% wage increase, while certain positions of the mine owners were upheld. But the balance of power between owners and labor had shifted appreciably and public awareness of working conditions in the coalfields had been raised to a new level. American Federation of Labor founder Samuel Gompers would call the strike "the most important single incident in the labor movement in the United States."

Maria would never warm to Roosevelt's unprecedented intervention in the strike or to his generally progressive instincts. But if the winds of political change were unsettling for her, disruptions within her own household were about to take precedence. Several years later, she would reflect on those unexpected events of 1903. Offering congratulations to Emily Hare on the engagement of her son Truxton, she adds her hope for a modicum of family order:

The others should now follow the good example set for them by Truxton. I cannot wish for you the succession of matrimonial shocks that were my fate three years ago. Let them take their time!

Much to Maria's surprise, the youngest of her four children had been the first to depart the nest. Edmund Coxe, with university credentials in hand, further emulated the model of his father and uncles by taking a southern bride. The young man who had often stirred family concern over susceptible health and occasional imprudent behavior had quickly risen to a

avored position in the Coxe Brothers' second generation. Skipping his place in line behind the touted Misses Coxe, he also stole the matrimonial show:

SMARTEST OF LATE JUNE WEDDINGS

The smart set journeyed from country seats and seashore villas to town yesterday to attend the nuptials of Miss Elizabeth E. Michaux Turner and Edmund James Drifton Coxe at St. James' Episcopal Church. The bride, who was given away by her father, was exquisitely robed in white chiffon and liberty silk, with trimmings of family lace. Her bridal veil of tuile was fastened with a wreath of orange blossoms, and she carried a shower bouquet of lillies-of-the-valley and orchids...

Charlotte was listed among the bridesmaids by the *Freeland Tribune*— but not by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, perhaps suggesting that she was prevailed upon by her brother as a late substitution that failed to make city editions. The *Tribune*, which served Luzerne County subscribers, also noted for local interest that reception guests included “all the members of the Coxe families of Drifton”.

Eliza, not mentioned as a participant in the elaborate ceremonials, may have been preoccupied with plans of her own; she would become the second Coxe sibling to marry— just four months later. Her engagement was noted prominently in the *New York Times*' “What is Doing in Society” column along with the movements of the Astors, Vanderbilts and a few sundry baronesses and countesses:

The report comes from Nahant, via Philadelphia of the engagement of Miss Eliza Middleton Coxe, a daughter of Mrs. Brinton Coxe, and Charles Morris Young, a Philadelphia Landscape painter. Miss Coxe came out several years ago, and it was while pursuing her art studies that she met Mr. Young. Both are spending part of the season at Nahant.

But eschewing the large Philadelphia wedding which might have been expected², the two were quietly married in Drifton and sailed to Paris. Eliza enrolled in the Academie Colarossi and her husband began to prepare paintings for an upcoming exhibition. At the suggestion of Mary Cassatt, with whom the Coxe family had an indirect Philadelphia connection³, the couple went to Giverny, the home of impressionist Claude Monet, living there during parts of their two summers abroad.

The *Times* mentions Eliza's relationship to the recently married Edmund, and drops an additional bit of social intelligence— the engagement of her sister Mary Rebecca (Polly) to Arthur Gerhard. From there, the pace accelerates further. The next Coxe marriage follows in just three weeks, and its haste and paucity of ceremony seems to mystify the press:

Miss Mary R. Coxe and Mr. Arthur Gerhard certainly stole a march on their numerous friends last Wednesday. Before many were aware of their marriage, Mr. & Mrs. Gerhard were far beyond the reach of rice and old shoes. Both the bride, who is the youngest daughter of Mrs. Brinton Coxe of 1515 Spruce Street, and Mr. Gerhard are extremely popular in smart circles. There have been few fashionable weddings in the past few years at which Mr. Gerhard has not been an attendant. No one witnessed their marriage but the uncles and aunts of the bride and bridegroom. Not even cousins or close friends were present. The bride and groom left immediately for Arizona where they will remain until the spring.

And this time, it was the *Philadelphia Inquirer* which alerted close observers of the social scene to the next startling turn of events on Spruce Street:

Miss Charlotte D. Coxe, another sister, will be married in January to Herr k. u. k. Oberlieutenant Imre Teuber, of Vienna.⁴

¹ Peter Roberts' 1904 sociological study *Anthracite Coal Communities* pointed favorably to the creation of the Mining and Mechanical Institute at Freeland as "the only practical effort made by philanthropic men to meet the requirements of the youth of the anthracite coal fields. Roberts notes that the Institute is maintained "by the voluntary contributions of public-spirited men at the head of whom stand the Coxes of Drifton."

² An insight is offered by an anonymous humor piece in the *Inquirer* (January 8, 1905). Purporting to be a letter addressed to "Susie Dearest" from an astute observer of the Philadelphia social milieu, it questions whether Eliza Coxe might experience difficulty in obtaining exclusive invitations for her artist-husband. "You remember she married for love, and that has been known to prove a barrier on several occasions."

³ American painter and printmaker Mary Cassatt's brother Gardner Cassatt and his wife Eugenie (Jennie) Carter Cassatt were part of the Coxe social circle in Philadelphia. Maria writes that she has "constant letters from Jennie Cassatt who is very quiet in Paris as Mary Cassatt for the present is living with them." An onboard dinner invitation from the Cassatts to Maria and her daughters during an Atlantic crossing is among Maria's accumulated private papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴ Kaiserlich und königlich Oberlieutenant = Imperial and Royal First Lieutenant. The k. u. k. abbreviation was used in the Austro-Hungarian empire for all empire-wide state affiliations.

12. CARNIVAL OF VIENNA



When 29-year-old Charlotte Coxe set off on another personal European adventure in 1903, she would have been a conspicuous steamship passenger. Privileged young American women traveled across the Atlantic with heavy trunks full of clothing options, frequently accompanied by experienced chaperon-guides and servants. A letter from Sophia Coxe to her sister offers reassurance to the ever-vigilant Maria as Charlotte prepared to sail from New York:

I think Mrs. Riegler will really be an excellent companion for her— very cheerful and happy tempered. She will also watch over Charlotte if she is not well and be very kind.

Elsewhere referred to as “our German friend,” Mrs. Riegler also increased Charlotte’s ability to navigate with ease on the continent. Charlotte’s previous letters from England record some practical details of traveling with hired assistance. She mentioned receiving bank drafts denominated in British pounds which were to be dispensed, as needed, to two members of her traveling party.

Staffed Philadelphia households were also rather international operations. Among those helping at 1515 Spruce Street were two Irish servants¹ and a third who was a native of Austria. Already a fluent German speaker, Charlotte had doubtless gained useful information and conversational practice for her next trip through interactions of daily life at home. (Recalling their playful childhood banter, Edmund referred to Charlotte as “meine Schwester” in a letter to his mother; Charlotte, in turn, played upon her brother’s earliest stumbling political declaration by jesting about “Edmy the Demogwat”.)

In addition to gaining the attention of others on shipboard, young socialites abroad provided fodder for the newspapers at home. By the turn of the century, social reporting had come into its own, with specialists in major American cities showing a greater tendency to comment as well as record the movements of their subjects. In Philadelphia, daily material about the “smart set” that ranged from romantic to satirical or mildly salacious was available to anyone who preferred to skip over the latest world news and market reports. Rather than appearing with an identifiable byline, these columns were published in Philadelphia and New York under anonymous titles like “Spotlight on Vanity Fair” and “Told in Her Boudoir”.

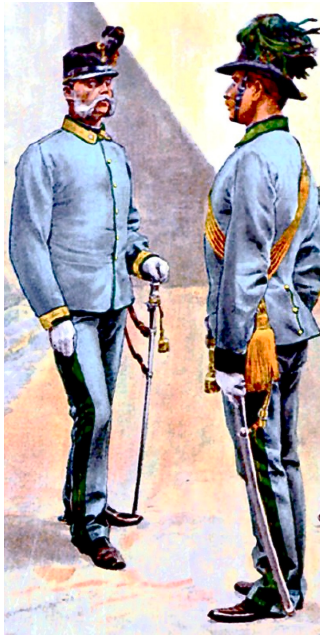
The social columnists treaded a thin line between journalism and romantic fiction— as the case of Charlotte Coxe demonstrated. For example, if New York readers were aware of the young Philadelphian and the new relationship that developed during her visit to Austria, it was in these terms...

She met Lieutenant Teuber in the Tyrol. One remembers how conducive to lovemaking this region is, especially if the famous novel of other years *Quits* has ever been read.

A bit of dialogue from that fictional work by Jemima Montgomery, the Baroness Tautphoeus², sets a scene that the *New York Times* reporter was trying to evoke:

‘...I can scarcely venture to give an opinion on this occasion, having scarcely seen Captain Falkner half-a-dozen times. In fact, were he to burst upon my dazzled sight in the full glory of his Austrian uniform at this moment, I should possibly not know him. Don’t you think you could persuade him to dress himself in all his accoutrements for our gratification, when he comes this evening formally to demand your hand of my uncle? Dress does make such a difference...’

‘Nora, you are laughing at me,’ cried Georgina, a good deal discomposed.



Had Charlotte read the novel in question, she might have been better prepared for the visual spectacle presented by members of the Habsburg Officer Corps. As the Philadelphia papers competed in their romanticized retellings of the first meeting of Charlotte and Emerich (Imre) Teuber, it was either on the dance floor at a formal ball in Vienna, or when the young Austrian rescued her during a mountain climb in the Tyrolean Alps.

Whatever the case, it is certain that Emerich (Imre) Teuber³ was suitably uniformed at their first meeting. His late father was a Prague-based journalist and editor who took a particular interest in Austrian military life and history. Emerich and his three brothers grew up in awe of Oscar Teuber’s massive reference book titled *Die Osterreichische Armee*, with its lavish full-color plates by Rudolf von Ottenfeld of the distinctive (and occasionally outlandish) uniforms that had adorned Austrian officers over two centuries. Each of the Teuber brothers encountered by Charlotte Coxe had found his way to the Infantry Cadet School, an Austrian military career and its traditional sharp tailoring. But the notion of love at first sight (or first calamity) is disputable.

An Austrian source tells the story differently. By this account, probably passed down by family members, Charlotte and her chaperon first encountered the Teuber brothers in the midst of the Viennese pre-Lenten Fasching festivities in late February of 1903. The high-spirited quartet could hardly have escaped notice in that city-wide period of tolerated indulgence. (The Teubers were apparently known to entertain their fellow revelers by impaling carnival fritters with drawn swords!) The first to catch Charlotte’s eye was Emerich’s brother Maurus— rather too young for her serious attention. But at 27, Emerich was within respectable reach and he seems to have pressed his case with the visiting American during the short time available. An invitation to one of the lively Faschingsballs probably followed. With a bit of cinematic imagination, we can picture the identically uniformed brothers accomplishing the “switch” during the masked whirl of such an evening.

Members of the Habsburg Officer Corps routinely faced expenses well in excess of their means. One possible but unlikely solution was to marry into a wealthy family. Pay was dramatically lower than in the German and French militaries and there were both explicit and unspoken expectations that came with their position. For example, those extraordinary sky blue uniforms needed to be spotlessly maintained or replaced, and economies available to others were considered off-limits: traveling on public buses, carrying one’s own packages, or eating in inexpensive restaurants. Debt was common, and the main compensation was perceived status.³ It is not out of the question that such practical circumstances of military life crossed the minds of the Teuber brothers as they escorted this wide-eyed visitor through the highlights of a Viennese festival week.³

But there were things about the Teuber brothers that attracted Charlotte, as well. Emerich was a gifted writer, and like her, fluent in multiple languages— a necessity in an army that drew its personnel from multiple ethnic groups of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Furthermore, he was raised as an appreciator of the arts by his father, who doubled as a theater critic and historian. If her time in Vienna included a meeting with Emerich's widowed mother, Charlotte was surely charmed by the retired professional actress. Emma Teuber-Rigol's entire life had been associated with the stage, from her adoption by the actor and theater director Eduard Kreibitz through her own success in a wide variety of roles in Graz and Prague. (Her legacy as a performer was doubtless sealed by marrying Oscar Teuber— who wrote favorably of her audience reception in another of his definitive surveys, *Geschichte des Prager Theaters*.)

Charlotte did not sail back to America until a month before Edmund's June wedding, so she indeed had time to visit the mountains as well as the city. As an officer of the 3rd Tyrolean Kaiserjäger, Emerich would, once again, have proven to be a well-positioned guide. Did his overdressed American tourist take a tumble on a mountainside that required assistance? Quite possibly. But whether real or imagined, it was the sort of detail that could add enticing column inches to the newspaper stories— back in Philadelphia.

¹ The Coxe family established and maintained close relationships with many of the immigrant servants who shared their home. Among the letters saved by Maria are several from former employees. One, mailed from Perryopolis in western Pennsylvania, thanks Maria for the gift of a "fine cloak" for her child, which the writer believes will make him "the center of interest in our kindly little village." Another letter sends greetings to the Coxe children, closing with the poignant apology that "we do not understand writing to a lady."

² A native of Ireland, Jemima Montgomery married Joseph Friedrich, baron von Tautphoeus of Marquartstein, chamberlain to the King of Bavaria. Her novels have been described as "entertaining combinations of romance and travelogue".

³ Born in Prague, his given name was Imre— the Hungarian equivalent of Emerich (German) or Henry (English). In the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the turn of the 20th century, Vienna and Prague were closely interconnected and the young officer used the German variant "Emerich" in many contexts. There are two spellings of the German name, with either a single or double "m" and I have opted for the former, which Emerich used to self-identify in several publications during this period.

⁴ István Deák's comprehensive study of the Habsburg Officer Corps, *Beyond Nationalism*, explores these pressures and elaborates on an unusual provision, the *Heiratskaution* or marriage bond, which required payment of a large deposit (equal to many times their annual salary) before the marriage of an officer was permissible. The author expresses the irony of this requirement: "Young officers were constantly on the lookout for the right *Partie*, the family rich and foolish enough to part with such an enormous sum and to entrust their daughter to a nomad with a modest income and the prospect of an early death."

13. MATRIMONY

On the first Saturday of May in 1903, the barn behind Maria Coxe's house in Drifton caught fire and burned to the ground— along with two buckboards and some harnesses. The fire quickly spread to her cherished woods and a force of Coxe Brothers & Co. employees were called upon to extinguish it. Soon thereafter, Charlotte sailed back into the Port of New York from Antwerp on the Red Star Lines' S.S. *Vaderland* with even more incendiary news. She was in love with an Austrian soldier.

Maria had three other weddings to contend with over the space of six months, so it's likely that the seriousness of Charlotte's foreign entanglement dawned on her only gradually— in the background of everything else that was happening. Letters began to arrive from Europe. Emerich was a persuasive writer who had already published a book of his father's stories on military life, with a laudatory personal introduction. There is little doubt that he carefully crafted his appeal to Charlotte and did everything within his power to evoke the memory of those carefree carnival days in Vienna and adventures in the clear Tyrolean air. As Charlotte readjusted to the confines of her mother's house and Philadelphia society, the freedom recalled in his letters was even more enticing.

Between wedding arrangements for Edmund, Eliza and Polly, Maria did her utmost to counter Emerich's correspondence with strong appeals to reason. He was, after all, a Roman Catholic. It was a boundary treated with respect but seldom crossed by the Coxes— Episcopalians all, and members of several long-established Philadelphia parishes. The family also had built the charming Tudor chapel of St. James in Drifton where Sophia taught Sunday school and the family flag had been planted forever with Eckley's burial in the churchyard. For Maria, who so valued her colonial lineage that she sometimes donned the dresses of her ancestors from a dusty closet at Alverthorpe, the thought of a daughter "crossing the Tiber" from her Protestant roots was more unthinkable than the merely geographic breach of crossing the Atlantic.

But Charlotte made her decision and Maria relented.

Emerich Teuber arrived in America to claim his bride on the SS *Graf Waldersee* of the Hamburg-America Line on the 9th of January, 1904, and it is evident that much confusion followed. The *Inquirer* ran a headline that immediately contradicted its message:

MISS COXE TO WED FOREIGNER QUIETLY

Ignoring the obvious wish of the mother-of-the-bride, the story reiterated that "Every caution has been taken to make the wedding as quiet as possible," and revealed that the marriage would be solemnized at St. Peter's Church on Pine Street on the very next day. Another paper said that the location would be the family home on Spruce Street. After the fact, the news sources reached a consensus that it had actually occurred at the residence of the Catholic archbishop— with an assistant clergyman standing in for the absent prelate. ("The bride is a member of St. Peter's Church, but since the Lieutenant is of the Roman Catholic faith, she consented that a priest of that church should perform the ceremony.")

Whether by intent, or thanks to the garbled information, attendance was light and "only a few members of the immediate family witnessed the ceremony", according to the *Wilkes-Barre Semi-Weekly Record*. The *Inquirer* put a positive moral spin on the modest ceremony:

The match is of interest to Pennsylvanians generally from the fact that the source of the Coxe income is from immense coal interests in the interior of the state. In spite of their great wealth and distinguished connection, the family is extremely un-ostentatious.

Charlotte had no maid of honor, but her cousin John Cadwalader, Jr. served as Emerich's American best man. Bridesmaids and ushers were "dispensed with". Aunt Becky hosted a small reception at her house and, by evening, the couple had headed for New York and the crossing to Hamburg and Emerich's home in Vienna.

Perhaps Charlotte was amused by the flurry of newspaper clippings forwarded to her by her sisters. One headline cast a mildly ominous pall on her entire relationship:

MET HER FATE IN THE TYROL
MISS COXE BECOMES A BRIDE OF LIEUT TEUBER OF AUSTRIA

A writer for the *Inquirer's* social page devoted an entire light-hearted commentary to her marriage, suggesting that Charlotte's pursuit by an Austrian might be part of a previously undetected wave:

What was once regarded as a joke has now become a serious fact. I refer to the Foreign Invasion of benedicts. The lovely Miss Charlotte Drifton Coxe, who was so quietly married last Monday to Lieutenant Teuber of the Austrian army, is the latest Quaker maid to take unto herself an alien spouse. Philadelphia seems to be the mark particular of the gallants from across the pond. In explanation of this it may be said that the Quaker City is regarded abroad with high esteem on account of its conservation and for its good breeding; and were many of the city daughters not literally worth much more than their weight in gold, still the benedicts would come. There has been some question of what Lieutenant Teuber's Christian name, Imre, stood for, if it was a name at all. A wag suggested to me "I Marry Right Eagerly." ²

But as Philadelphia buzzed with speculation about the surprising match, the city also seemed to remember Charlotte more generously. One article offered a high compliment that she was unaccustomed to hearing:

The bride has long been a social favorite.

¹ Many of the Coxes contributed to the building and endowing of the church. Sophia once called her sister-in-law Rebecca "the most open-handed woman I have ever met" and her bequests to St. James' still support its mission.

² Philadelphia Inquirer, Feb. 7, 1904, p.30.

14. A TRIP TO WINDY HILL

Several weeks after my meeting with Mrs. Young in suburban Wayne, I drove north to Drifton. Today, the most obvious signs of its past as a gritty industrial center are a couple of modest residential streets aptly named “Coal Miner Drive” and “Sophia Coxe Drive”. Woodlands have reclaimed much of the land undermined or stripped of its resources in the anthracite heyday and the remaining residents are adequately served by a very helpful local post office that opens at noon.

With the postmaster’s directions in hand, I turned up the winding road to Windy Hill. The first view of the mansion is still impressive through its stone and iron entrygate. The original structure, “beautiful for its situation high on its terraces”, was destroyed by fire in 1938 while Elizabeth Sinkler Coxe was in Philadelphia. But the somewhat reduced reconstruction is still the most distinctive home in Drifton.

After the deaths of Aunt Lizzie and Eckley Jr. (who died at only 44) the house passed to Charlotte’s sister Eliza and then to Eliza’s son Philip Francis Young, by whose invitation I had come to Drifton. Meeting my second nonagenarian Coxe relation, I had begun to sense the fragility of Charlotte’s story and to value every bit of information shared by these generous living links to that bygone generation. Philip Young— the last surviving child of the Coxe sister who had headed to Paris and summered at Giverny with her painter husband— was a gracious host. Dressed in a gray suit for our meeting, he spoke softly and often deferred to his caregiver, who seemed sufficiently familiar with family matters to assist him through the occasional lapsed detail.



Since Philip was not born until 1916, Charlotte had been in Europe for over two decades by the time he was aware of family matters. He distinctly recalled his mother exchanging letters with her sister in Austria but none of their correspondence was still preserved at Windy Hill. I shared what little I knew about Emerich Teuber and we talked at length about the original home of Brinton and Maria— his grandparents. Philip said that only a gate and some crumbling stone border walls still marked their land across the road and just down the hill. That house had fallen into disrepair and was razed and bulldozed into its foundation many years ago.

As we spoke, I did not notice that Philip’s caregiver had stepped out of the room. When she returned a few minutes later, she was carrying an old leather-bound album. She held it open to a page with a startling card-mounted photograph from the studio of G. Brunner & Co. in Trento— a gently smiling young woman holding a baby wrapped in lace coverings. Over her shoulder, a man looks on with paternal pride. He wears an Austrian infantry uniform and a single medal is prominently displayed on his jacket.

With Philip’s permission I looked very briefly around the house, stopping to examine a cabinet filled with small artifacts from Eckley Junior’s days as the foremost patron of the University of Pennsylvania’s Department of Egyptology. His was a life spent in honor of his absent father, Charles— compensating through his own explorations for that deeply felt loss on the Nile.

Before leaving, I strolled down the stone steps into the park-like gardens. Windy Hill is situated so that its visual impact is most striking when looking back at the house from that direction. It is easy to imagine the splendor of the place when Charlotte's Aunt Lizzy tended its terraced plots and water sprang from the fountain. While the grounds are still impressive, their broken columns and empty pool evoke something like the feeling of walking among the ruins at Delphi or Olympia where the imagination supplies much of the scene outlined by the remaining stones. I could picture young Eck and the Coxe sisters in their summer leisure.



Seeing Philip Young's century-old photograph of Charlotte and Emerich in Austria was a turning point in my search for her story. Vague family recollections about Charlotte's move to Europe suddenly took on flesh and blood and my attention shifted to that radical separation from her old life in Pennsylvania. With her own letters missing from the record, Charlotte's part in telling the tale ended completely. Everything would now depend on recovering and making sense of the reports and sightings of others.

During their first years as a couple, Charlotte and Emerich divided their time between quiet Vienna neighborhoods and his Alpine military posting in Trento—familiar terrain from their whirlwind courtship. While Maria Coxe had strenuously resisted her daughter's matrimonial choice, she seems to have heartily approved of the Austrian capital city which she viewed, as always, from an environmental perspective. During a visit, she wrote enthusiastically to Emily Hare about the climate and surroundings:

The cool air with frequent rains make the gardens as fresh and green as England — and they have the advantage here of a clear atmosphere. The hills round Vienna are lovely, dotted with villas and covered with thick woods through which everyone is free to wander. The highest are 1500 feet above the Danube, so that the views are superb. From the little Village Hotel where we have large clean rooms, it is over half a mile to the house of Mrs. Teuber, uphill all the way, past a good many pretty and comfortable looking houses. The roads are kept thoroughly clean and are shaded by avenues of horsechestnuts. The gardens have in them a great variety of flowering shrubs and trees. Just now, the roses are coming into bloom.

In fact, Maria seems to be building her case for extending the city parks of Philadelphia:

It is such a blessing when the poorer classes have in every direction parks to which they can all go and the population seems to turn out “en masse”. There are thousands of gardens where the families sit and listen to music and drink beer or coffee.

She is also impressed by the outdoor entertainments that abound in the city, including what seems like an early prototype for the American “Rose Parade” She watches 1200 carriages participate in the *Blumenkorso* on the Prater, each splendidly decorated with flowers. But the highlight of her visit is watching a review of the troops by Emperor Franz Joseph, which greatly appeals to her aristocratic sensibilities:

It was a wonderful sight to see him arrive and ride slowly round the great field, while all the bands in unison played the Fraternal Hymn¹ The regiments then marched past the Emperor while he was seated on his horse and saluted them. At 78, this was a great effort for the good old man who is really much beloved. The regiment of Hussars to which Willy Teuber belongs came last with the most beautiful horses I ever saw.

Vienna, near the end of the empire, cherished its symbols of order.

Maria, seemingly much at peace with her extended Austrian family, promises photographs to Emily which will include Charlotte, Emerich and all three of his brothers. But this rapprochement had not happened immediately. An earlier visit to the couple in Trento seems to have been fraught with turmoil. An alarmed letter from Charlotte’s sister Eliza to her mother captures the tone of this prior encounter, if not the specifics:

Dear Mamma,

Thank you for your letter forwarded to me from Paris. I am sorry you had so many disagreements with Mrs. Teuber, but you promised solemnly not to interfere with any of their arrangements before Imre consented to your going to visit at the time you did. He and Charlotte were afraid from the first that you would not approve of their arrangements, so Imre begged you to postpone your visit. Then you said you would not interfere and they asked you to come...²

The Coxe sisters had become vocal advocates for one another on their unconventional paths.

¹ The anthem of Austria-Hungary was set to Haydn’s *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser*, a tune already familiar to Maria as the customary setting of the English hymn, *Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken* with text by John Milton. In English and American hymnals, the tune is simply called *Austria*, avoiding the nationalistic overtones of the original title.

² Eliza’s letter is an interesting example of how the European postal services accommodated these American travelers. She is responding to a letter that had been forwarded to her from Paris to a hotel in Madrid. In turn, her emphatic words to her mother did not arrive before Maria had already left to meet her Italian cousin Angelina, who was taking the “cure” at Salsomaggiore, Italy. Remarkably, the letter appears to have caught up with her there. Perhaps even more remarkable is that Maria saved Eliza’s rather stern note of rebuke. She seems to have taken it to heart thereafter, as the much happier visit to Vienna indicates.



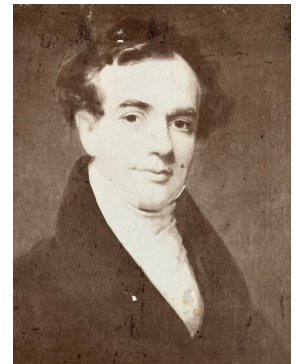
15. TWO HOUSES, BOTH ALIKE...

By this point in my research, a striking parallel between these families on two sides of the Atlantic had started to emerge. While they differed in nationality, religion and professional identity, each family had produced a set of brothers with a driving sense of filial obligation.

For the sons of Charles Sidney Coxe— Brinton, Alexander, Eckley, Henry and Charles, it was an obligation to further develop the resources of the coal lands assembled by their father. For the sons of Oscar Karl Teuber— Emerich, Wilhelm, Oscar and Maurus, it was an obligation to serve high patriotic ideals through military leadership.

In each case, the father who loomed over the destinies of the sons had set expectations for the next generation reflecting his own aspirations.

Charles Coxe had left his position as a Philadelphia judge to concentrate on consolidating the family's land interests and to explore and develop the coal resources beneath them. But it quickly became clear to him that the massive task would extend well beyond his lifetime. His sons were raised, educated and instilled with a passion to continue the work— for the sake of the family and to meet the energy needs of the growing nation. When Anna Sophia Yarnall studied the Coxe family as background for her 1981 novelization, she stressed the old adage "A man must do what's laid upon him" as the defining dynamic of the Coxes of Drifton.



Oscar Teuber trained at the Theresian Military Academy in Wiener-Neusadt but thereafter became a writer and finally Editor-in-Chief of the *Wiener Zeitung*— an important government-owned newspaper. Among his popular published writings were the glamorized military histories as well as short stories that drew upon his student days at the Academy. These works extolled the army as the key unifying instrument of the diverse Austro-Hungarian Empire— wrapping "its unifying ribbon around all nationalities." By the time he died in 1901 at the age of only 50, all of his sons had chosen careers as officers.



The book that Emerich promptly completed and published for his father was subtitled "An Austrian Reader for the People and the Army" and was dedicated to Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Emerich's foreword to the book is steeped in patriotic rhetoric:

Suddenly, my father's work was interrupted; the ever-laboring hand has fallen silent; this faithful Austrian, this good man is no more! May these pages—the completed work— serve as his legacy to the dear Austrians he loved so much! May they help to bring peace and harmony to our beautiful homeland! Then the work will have fulfilled its purpose; then the spirit of the deceased will have found repose! God willing!

Vienna, in November 1901 —Emerich Teuber, k. u. k. Oberlieutenant

As Maria Coxe prepared the family photographs from Austria for mailing to her friends and relatives at home, it must have occurred to her that her daughter Charlotte had moved from a familiar sphere of paternal influence to another one— with very different sensibilities. In the various pictures, several of the Teuber brothers in their neatly pressed tunics (and sometimes donning the distinctive tall caps of the officer corps) pose with Charlotte, giving the distinct

impression that she had married into a regiment. A large mountain dog from Emerich's alpine army outpost appears in some of the photos— taking the place often held by little “Binkie,” the poodle or bichon Charlotte left behind in Philadelphia.¹



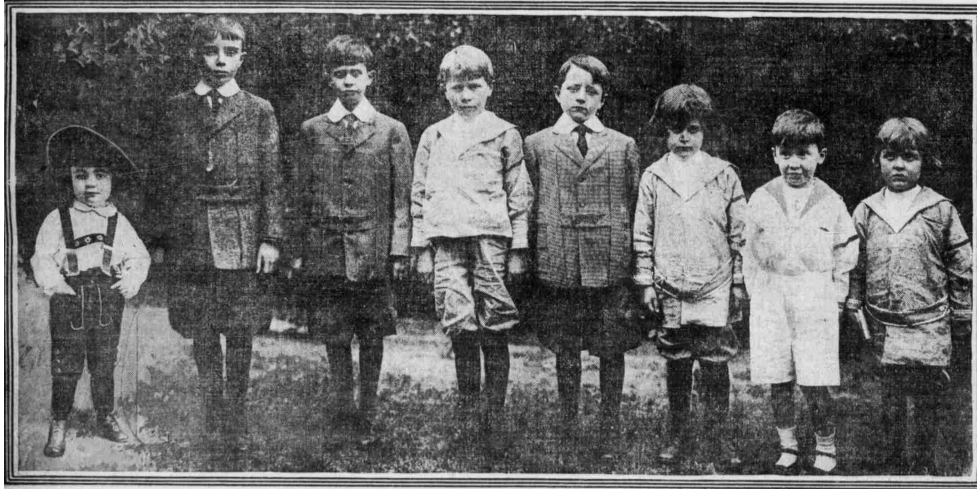
Two children were born to Charlotte and Emerich in their early years together— Emerica Maria Rebecca Teuber in March of 1905, and Oskar Brinton Teuber in June of 1906, thereby passing on the baptismal names of Charlotte's mother, father and aunt as well as that of Emerich's father. Rather than waiting for a son, they gave their daughter a feminine form of Emerich's own name, which also had a playful phonic resemblance to “America”. By the arrival of the second child, Maria Coxe had regained good favor with the couple and was present in Vienna. She was in the midst of writing a letter when the news reached her:

—Just here was I interrupted by Imre who came to announce the birth of a son at three o'clock this morning. I had seen Charlotte last evening and she sat at dinner with the family and two friends of Imre, so she was not ill for many hours and now has a fine little boy. Charlotte has been looking wonderfully well the two weeks since I came to Dornbach. The little boy is to be (Oskar²) after Imre's father, and promises to be strong and nice looking.

Emerich's sense of personal responsibility for the “repose” of his deceased father's spirit made the faltering of his own military career especially painful. Despite a positive record and several commendations, he would soon be declared unfit for service and finally submit his resignation for health reasons early in 1911. It is unclear what specific factors led to this departure, but official files show no shortage of contributing ailments— physical and emotional. As his young family grew, well-supported through Charlotte's financial resources, he began a search for other avenues of meaningful engagement and recognition.

During this period when his first career was unraveling— and while on extended leave— Charlotte and Emerich sailed to America on the the newest steamship of the Hamburg America Line, the S.S. *Cleveland*. Their arrival was noted in the *Inquirer* under the heading “Society Events of Timely Interest” and Charlotte was honored at a tea hosted by her sister Polly at her new family home at Rosemont. The Teubers also made a side trip to Washington.

While the Teuber children did not accompany Charlotte and Emerich on this visit to America, the couple did bring along an amusing new photograph of little Oskar. Denied a complete gathering of her grandsons, Maria later would have this image grafted onto a picture of his male American cousins— the various Coxes, Gerhards and Youngs. In this early and slightly awkward anticipation of “photoshop” technology, he would be distinguished both by his diminutive size *and* his appearance in full Austrian folk costume...



¹ Charlotte had written to Edmund from her travels in England, “At one of the plays we saw in London, there was a most beautiful French Poodle— He was all covered with yellow ribbons. He was so sweet that I am thinking of bringing home one like him.” Thereafter, a fluffy white dog appears with her in several family pictures taken around the Coxe home on Spruce Street.

² As a result of German spelling reforms, “Oskar” with a “k” became standard. I have adopted this spelling for all references to Charlotte’s son, in the interest of clarity.

³ During this visit, Emerich seems to have developed a strong connection with Polly’s husband Dr. Arthur Gerhard, and the Gerhards would return the visit several years later.



Oscar Teuber and His Sons (c. 1900)



Charlotte and Emerich (c. 1904)

16. A New Venture

After a century passes, only a few family anecdotes survive— handed down with a sense of particular importance or amusement through multiple generations of storytellers. One such tale shared by Hilda Osterhout Young had just that ring of authenticity. During Charlotte and Emerich's visit to America, she said, the couple joined other family members at a large social gathering. During the course of the evening, another guest introduced herself to Emerich as a certain Miss Cox, to which he responded with an enthusiastic greeting as her new Austrian relative. Overhearing the conversation, the assembled Coxes corrected him in unison from the other side of the hall— "She's a Cox without the *E*, without the *E*!"

Duly chastised, Emerich realized that the lines of Philadelphia society were guarded carefully, and that an extra letter here or there could be a matter of consequence.

The Teubers' trip to Washington during their 1909 stay in America was motivated by more than sight-seeing. As Emerich's military prospects lost momentum, he was turning his attention to work with youth. Like his father, Emerich Teuber admired and even romanticized the formative training offered to infantry cadets, and he was interested in other models of character-building and patriotic activity for young people. When he returned home, he took along his observations (both positive and negative) of several such organizations in America.¹

On the recommendation of his brother Willy, he had read *Scouting for Boys*— recently published in England by Lord Robert Baden-Powell. As another army officer interested in adapting structured training methods to civilian life, Baden-Powell impressed Emerich as a kindred spirit. Before long, he made his first attempt to organize a scouting group in Vienna, beginning with a modest assemblage of seven electro-mechanical apprentices. He borrowed Baden-Powell's ideas about immersion in nature and "the daily good deed" with the objective of producing effective members of society.

Others, including his brother Willy, had experimented with Baden-Powell's ideas, but Emerich's persuasive ability and the ample financing made possible through his marriage to Charlotte led to visible success in Vienna. Taking the necessary steps to make his efforts official, he was widely credited with establishing the first scout organization in Austria— and was thereafter known to his young charges as "Papa Teuber". Out of the ashes of one pursuit and identity had arisen another— which happily allowed him to remain in uniform!

Kurt Pribich, an historian of scouting in Austria, offered a surprisingly forthright analysis of Emerich Teuber's complex motivations in beginning this work:

Emerich Teuber, who had become a wealthy man through his marriage, sought his way into the upper social circles of high-ranking civil servants, military personnel, and wealthy individuals. Since his family and his wife's wealth could not satisfy his need for recognition, he sought something new and found his field of activity in patriotic youth education and youth welfare.

There were other ways in which he sought to enhance his social position. Emerich's father Oscar had established close ties with the Austrian imperial family through his journalistic and historical work. He received multiple honors and was considered a press officer for the successor to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. A year after Emerich's retirement from the army, his father's connection allowed him to gain unusual access to the Archduke and his family in order to write about their private life for the German newspaper *Die Woche*.

The lengthy article included a photograph of the Archduke, his wife and children at leisure in the breakfast room of Belvedere Palace. It introduced the imperial heir to the newspaper's Berlin readership as a cultured, amiable and astute leader— who also enjoyed an intimate friendship with the German ruling family of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Emerich reminded his readers that Franz Ferdinand had been invited to serve as godfather at the baptism of the German Crown Prince's youngest son. The two empires were bound together by the good feeling between these esteemed families. Having made his case, Emerich concludes:

And so the successor to the throne of the Habsburg monarchy, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, will remain on Habsburg's honorable throne the good and honorable man whom the few permitted to learn his noble character and good heart already revere.²

Emerich Teuber, *Die Woche's* readers could conclude, considered himself one of "the few".

As Emerich labored to redefine himself, Charlotte was much involved with her young children. She was probably among the first to recognize the developmental issues exhibited by Emerica as she began to fall behind on the expected benchmarks of childhood progress. In family pictures from this time period, she often appears rather frail and listless.



¹ This new career interest was doubtless greeted with enthusiasm by Maria and others among the Philadelphia Coxes, since it promised a more stable domestic life for the young couple and squared with Maria's own interest in the healthful benefits of the outdoors. Among receipts for her various charitable donations is a letter from an early camping program, "The Children's Country Week Association", which notes "There are many who are much benefitted by the opportunity of enjoying the pure air and other privileges of country life for a time." Family members likely assisted Emerich with contacts in Washington relevant to his exploration.

² *Die Woche*, No. 6, 1912, p. 237ff.

17. Peril on the Sea

During these years when Charlotte Coxe faded from the memory of Philadelphians, the daughter of another wealthy coal mining family had gained their interest.

In what quickly became “the most publicized romance of the age,” Katherine Elkins of West Virginia had attracted the romantic attention of a European royal. By November of 1908, their pictures were on the front page of the *New York Times*, and other newspapers competed to reveal details of the relationship. Katherine’s admirer was even reported to have visited America *incognito* for a meeting with her; an engagement was rumored. But Charlotte took no pleasure in this particular social flurry. Katherine’s suitor was already familiar to her— Prince Luigi Amadeo of Savoy.¹

In 1912, an iceberg sank the *Titanic*.

Charlotte’s submersion in the circumstances of her new life was less spectacular and more subtly life-taking. As it became clearer that both of the Teuber children experienced different degrees of mental disability, an undercurrent of blame-casting seems to have entered Charlotte and Emerich’s relationship. In what was for many years the most authoritative history of Austrian scouting, a speculative assumption from that period is reported without question:

The Drifton Coxe family only reluctantly agreed to their daughter’s marriage to Emerich Teuber, as it was customary for marriages to take place only within the Coxe family in order to keep property and power within the family. This led to signs of degeneration, which later became apparent in Emerich Teuber’s family, his wife, and his two children.²

Viewed from a culture painfully familiar with the European history of royal inbreeding, such assumptions about the Philadelphia aristocracy would have invited little skepticism.³ And Charlotte’s own extended family in America may have contributed to the speculation. In the non-fiction precursor to Anna Sophia Yarnall’s novel— which drew upon first-hand memories of Coxe relations and other closely connected Drifton people— she paints a harsh picture of Maria Coxe’s mental state: “Maria was as unstable emotionally as Brinton was physically”. And she records an observation which may have been repeated by some within the Coxe circle, if only in hushed tones:

Her mother, a Middleton from South Carolina, transmitted to her children not only the honor of being descendants of a signer of the Declaration of Independence but a predisposition to insanity that broke out spasmodically and without warning.

She reaches back several generations and names some names.

Unverified family rumors and memories of pre-scientific diagnoses in America very likely mixed together with a dash of European history into the cocktail of easy blame. However, even more complicating marital dynamics would soon beset the Teubers.

Emerich Teuber now concentrated his energies on his scouting (*Pfadfinder* in German) pursuits, including the building up of an organized national movement and establishing international connections— including contact with Lord Baden-Powell himself. His scouts appeared, handsomely attired, in many charitable roles around Vienna and Emerich promoted their work through his own persuasive speaking and advocacy. His success was self-reported in a letter to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*:

FROM AUSTRIAN BOY SCOUTS

Lieutenant Emerich Teuber, chief scout of the Austrian Boy Scouts, has under his command 1,300 boy scouts and 112 scoutmasters. The head of the Austrian Scouts writes a most interesting letter regarding the International Congress of First Aid and the German Medical Congress. He states that a great many of his scouts were employed as interpreters of French, English, Slavic and Esperanto. They aided as guides and messengers during the congress. He states that a great many Austrian scouts are desirous of exchanging post cards with the American Boy Scouts.

In 1914, Emerich's vision of a world interconnected through its youth was shattered.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Duchess Sophie of Hohenburg, were shot and killed by a Serbian nationalist as they rode through the streets of Sarajevo. It was the first act in a series of declarations and responses that would draw Austria-Hungary and eventually the United States into the Great War— as members of two opposed alliances. As part of a broad Austrian mobilization, Emerich was re-activated for non-combatant service— at the rank of Captain, never reached during his earlier career.

At first, America remained neutral as the war spread in Europe. And people were of divided opinions about the conflict. Polly's husband, Dr. Arthur Gerhard, published a letter that he received from Dr. Clemens von Pirquet, a medical colleague in Vienna— making a case for greater American sympathy with Austria and its German backers.

In 1915, the German navy sank the *Lusitania*.

Later that year, a most peculiar front page of Philadelphia's *Evening Ledger* featured two contrasting photographs. The first was Maria Coxe's composite picture of her grandsons. Seemingly oblivious to international events, she had submitted the photograph with the caption "My Voters" to emphasize a role that she had assumed zealously since all of her children left the house:

They are the grandsons of Mrs. Brinton Coxe, of 1515 Spruce Street, one of the most determined workers in the Pennsylvania Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.⁴ From left to right, they are Oskar Brinton Teuber, son of Captain Teuber of the Austrian army and Mrs. Teuber, who was Miss Charlotte Coxe...

The second photograph was captioned "Autumn Harvest of Death Reaped by the French in their Drive Against the Germans" and its details were sobering:

On the left is the scene of desolation that remained after the storm had swept over the 17-mile front on which the Gallic legions concentrated their attack. A solitary cavalryman rides over a field strewn with mutilated bodies.

The war impacted many aspects of life on both continents. The *Vaderland*, the ship on which Charlotte sailed home to America after meeting Emerich, was converted for troop transportation and renamed the *Southland* to substitute for the German-sounding original. In this service, it was torpedoed twice and sunk by German U-boats.

When America finally entered the war in 1917, the significant funds flowing to the Teubers from the Coxe estate in America immediately ceased. Dr. Arthur Gerhard was

sent to France with the U.S. Army Medical and Orthopedic Corps⁴— placing the cordial husbands of Polly and Charlotte in the service of opposing international alliances.

¹ After his circumnavigation of the globe on the *Cristoforo Colombo* and his dinner visit to the Coxe house on Spruce Street, Luigi had been a busy man— leading an expedition to Mount St. Elias and following the celebrated example of Charlotte’s relative Elisha Kent Kane with his own arctic exploration aboard the *Polar Star*. See Tenderini and Shandrick. *The Duke of the Abruzzi: An Explorer’s Life*.

² Kurt Pribich, *Logbuch der Pfadfinderverbände in Österreich*, 2001.

³ The Spanish branch of the Habsburgs provides famous examples.

⁴ As early as 1911, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had noted that there was no consensus among the city’s social elite on the question of voting rights for women. A March 19th headline read “Woman Suffrage Question Divides Smart Set into Two Camps”. A statement from the president of the “Antis” underscores the aristocratic fear underlying their opposition: “We all know that vast numbers of women have come to this city whose ballot could not be intelligently cast. Does anybody doubt that the politicians would simply find an easily controlled element for further entrenching themselves in power?”

⁴ The shift of the United States position on the war from neutrality to alignment with the Triple Entente (now France, Britain and Italy) left some families with international connections and sympathies in a complicated situation. Dr. Gerhard’s previous advocacy for the Austrians and Germans was reported to the government— even as he sailed to France. An official exchange of letters among investigators and Gerhard’s American colleagues established his loyalty.

18. House Hunting

During Emerich's call-up to military service, he directed scout involvement as volunteers in support of the Austrian Red Cross—conducting street collections and transporting donated supplies. For these efforts, he received multiple honors including the Knight's Cross of the Franz Joseph Order and the Salvator Medal from the Vienna City Council. His wartime projects led to a civilian position after the conflict as an inspector of the city's child and youth welfare institutions.

But unseen beneath the medals pinned to his uniform were stresses originating at home. The loss of Charlotte's reliable resources from America forced the sale of the couple's villa in Dornbach. Charlotte confronted Emerich with unspecified accusations about his scouting activities, which the scouting biographer says were "prompted or even encouraged by schemers and envious individuals". Whatever the root of the dispute, Charlotte left him in 1917 and lived for a time in the Semmering Valley, accompanied by her personal secretary.

Kurt Pribich tells the story of these years with an understandable focus on the founding figure of Austrian scouting, "Papa" Teuber. But the portrait that he provides is both telling and sad. He describes a man severely affected by the social upheaval of the war.

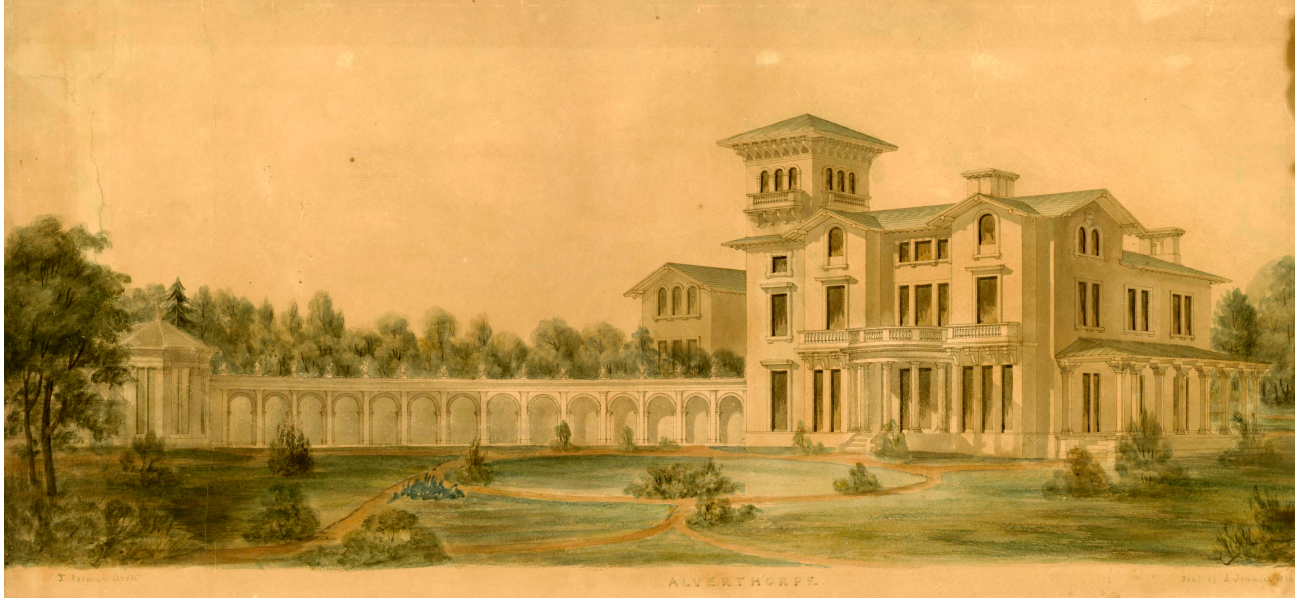
His family life was destroyed, his fortune gone, and his world and patriotic ideals obliterated. The only reminder of the past in his study was a signed picture of Emperor Franz Jeoseph I.¹

During this period, much of Emerich's energy was devoted to reorganizing the scouting movement and seeking alternate sources of support. This seems to have required a more conciliatory attitude toward other leaders and ideas. In time, the restriction on Charlotte's American funds was lifted and the couple effected a reconciliation. However, the Coxe trustees had apparently grown uncomfortable with Emerich's reputedly loose use of the income—meant for the benefit of the family. In an interesting arrangement, Emerich's brother Maurus (according to family stories, Charlotte's first attraction among the foursome of brothers) was engaged to exercise oversight.²

The large influx of accumulated money from America and the depreciated values of Austrian real estate after the war presented an opportunity for investment in some conspicuous properties—assets that would be more resistant to Emerich's "generous hand". As a result, the Teubers gradually became significant landholders—including a large estate near Klagenfurt called *Ehrenbichl*, an apartment in Vienna, and a distinctive castle-like house in the Nonntal district of Salzburg that the family called *Theresienschlössl*.

The Klagenfurt estate was far-reaching—including the 17th century manor house, a working farm, two summer villas and a forest house called *Franzlhuhn*. Charlotte's hand is evident in an elaborate garden design for the estate that was appealingly rededicated in color by Irma Franzen-Heinrichsdorff, a woman pioneer in Europe's male-dominated landscape architecture field.² The lengthy pergola and pavilion in the design mirror comparable structures at Alverthorpe that Charlotte recalled fondly from her early visits to the Jenkintown home of her grandparents (see comparative illustrations)—a distant but comforting memory of childhood tranquility.

Theresienschlössl in Salzburg became a hub of scouting activity in that city and Emerich had a camping shelter constructed on the grounds. Down to the present, a small back street in the area carries the name *Pfadfinderweg*⁴ (Pathfinder Way). A news item in *Salzburger Chronik* of July 3, 1924 reports on a ceremony in the Theresienschlössl garden for the dedication of three marble busts—Emerich's father and grandfather, as well as Charlotte's father, Brinton Coxe.



Alverthorpe, The Jenkintown Estate of Joshua Francis Fisher
(Grandfather of Charlotte Drifton Coxe)
J. Notman Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia



Design for a Garden at Ehrenbichl, the Klagenfurt Estate of Emerich and Charlotte Teuber
Rendering by Irma Franzen-Heinrichsdorff
Image courtesy of Gert Gröning

Present to bless the garden of “father figures” was Petrus Kloz, Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Peter.

Interestingly, these busts appear again in an extraordinary journal kept by a young woman named Georgina Giles, a member of a group of Girl Guides from suburban London who visited Salzburg in 1936 as part of an international tour.⁵ “Georgie” and her friends were invited to the Teuber house in Salzburg where Emerich greeted them:

After a walk of about a quarter of an hour we arrived at Papa Teuber's schloss. He met us at the gate and after shaking hands with each of us separately he introduced us to his family. Each member of the family, cousins, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers, children etc., was introduced to us with their full rank and what they had done for the good of the town, etc., and they in turn shook hands with each one of us! After the lengthy introductions were over the Lord High Everything Else (Papa Teuber) took us round his estate. He showed us his wife's apartments which were a separate schloss from his and took us round the garden. We all had to admire the marble busts of his father and grandfather and then he told us he was going to have his bust also carved. I am afraid that some of us found it rather difficult not to laugh as Papa was a little short stout man with a huge paunch! He then showed us a grave of one of his dogs and then passed on to a private swimming bath he had built for the Scouts and his staff...

Papa Teuber then gave us a most patriotic speech and among other things said how beautiful we were and how proud he was to have the privilege of acting as host for the English gudes, etc., and so forth.

Charlotte makes a brief appearance during the visit of the guides— less noteworthy to the youthful observer:

Papa Teuber's wife presented Mrs. Beer (our Commandant) with 30 schillings to be spent on our party. Later, each of us bought a memento.



Theresienschlössl, Salzburg

¹ Franz Joseph was 84 years old at the beginning of World War I and the outward stability that he represented had been tenuous. Historian James L. Stokesbury says that “the ruling philosophy of his House, as expressed by its greatest minister, Prince Metternich, had been ‘Govern and change nothing.’”

² Concerns about Emerich’s money habits may have arisen much earlier. A story passed down through the Coxe and Young families suggests that Maria had initiated an investigation through the Pinkerton Detective Agency which was already regularly engaged by Coxe Brothers & Co. for the purpose of mine security. According to this story, when confronted by Maria with a question about suspected gambling debts, he was said to reply, “Madam, *all* officers have gambling debts!” Based on financial patterns observed in István Deák’s study of the Habsburg Officer Corps, this may not have been an outlandish generalization. (See Deák, p. 123)

³ See Gert Gröning, *From Dangast to Colorado Springs*, p. 76

⁴ *Pfadfinder* is the Austrian equivalent of “boy scout”.

⁵ See David Westwood, *British Girl Guides visit Bavaria and Austria in 1936*. The discovery of this travel journal and its publication in 2013 provided other interesting information. On their way to Austria, the Guides also stopped at Berchtesgaden in Bavaria, where they had a personal encounter with Adolf Hitler. Georgie, ever an astute observer, says: “He is a little chap, rather like Charlie Chaplin with his toothbrush moustache with a very fascinating smile.” This meeting is all the more remarkable since scouting was viewed with deep suspicion by the authorities who gave primacy within the country to the Hitler Youth— some of whom were staying at the same hostel and invited the Guides to join them on an uphill hike to the summer home of the Führer.

19. Appearances

Emerich Teuber's public persona was closely connected to his uniforms.

Back In 1910, Charlotte's globe-trotting Aunt Lizzie was enroute to an adventure on the *Orient Express* with two of her South Carolina nieces— Anne Sinkler and Laura Stevens.

Our first stop was at Vienna where we spent two days seeing all the sights under the escort of Ober Lieutenant (Emerich) Teuber, who changed his gorgeous uniforms three or four times a day, and took us out to see his mother and Charlotte's children at their villa. As this was a great race day and all the equipages engaged, he had to borrow horses from his regiment for two Victorias, and he and Anne and I sat together in one, I acting as interpreter as best I might for a gay little flirtation between them.¹

Charlotte— presumably in the other elegant carriage with Laura— escapes specific mention in Aunt Lizzie's travelogue. Even in the company of these fashionable travelers, Emerich had a way of seizing the sartorial center stage.

When he left the military and entered a series of changing roles within Austrian scouting (sometimes as an international representative), he continued to attend to his attire. Unfortunately, as Georgina Giles' travel diary suggests, the effect was less striking in later years. At around the same time as the visit of the English Girl Guides, Scoutmaster Josef Georg Fortelny of Vienna was creating a series of amusing character sketches for friends within the movement.

His picture of Emerich shows "Papa Teuber" in full scouting dress— apparently making a rhetorical point to a gathered audience. "...und wenn der Krieg kommt..." (...and when the war comes...). Historian Philipp Lehar who supplied the image suggested to me that the caption probably refers to Emerich's habits of self-presentation— often using his military rank, wearing his medals, and telling stories from his time in the army.



Kurt Pribich's logbook covers Emerich's various scouting organizations and positions in considerable detail and highlights a few moments that surely boosted his self-esteem. One of the most touching was a torchlight parade organized in his honor by the Vienna scouts for his 50th birthday— and the presentation of a special badge of gratitude.

Pribich says that over time, Emerich became less directly involved with day-to-day scouting operations and concentrated on his private life, with the family shifting residence between Vienna, Salzburg, Klagenfurt and another acquired house in Munich. But a different comment about Emerich's movements caught my attention:

He also travelled with his wife, who had been mentally ill since 1921, and their daughter to the Riviera.

It is entirely possible and understandable that the stresses of the war years could have exacerbated whatever tendencies Rebecca Coxe had observed as Charlotte's "peculiar disposition" many years before, but the serious mental impairment of Emerich (fully apparent by 1921) may have made this assumption about Charlotte's health fit neatly into the broader narrative of inherited dysfunction. Georgie's casual observation of the couple's

separate living quarters in Salzburg suggests an arrangement that may have followed Charlotte's reconciliation with Emerich. But while she may have been regarded somewhat dismissively, she and both of her children were still the line of succession for the generous proceeds that flowed to Austria from the Coxe Trust. She would still join the entire Familie Teuber for periodic photographs. But absent from these later images is the lively spirit that she radiated in her dance pose at a Philadelphia studio or the mystery suggested by her Atlantic City portrait amid the mirrors.

Charlotte and Emerich had married at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when there was assumed to be a hereditary predisposition to conditions such as hysteria and neuresthenia. Interestingly, the latter was observed to affect busy society women and overworked businessmen. It also was considered especially prevalent among Americans—leading to the popular, if rather vague, term “Americanitis”². A common response was the “rest cure” which seems to align with the months-long restrictions that had been prescribed for Charlotte's mother Maria in 1895. As she wrote to Emily Hare,

I have been suffering so much from nervous prostration that I have been under the doctor's care since July and forbidden to write a line that was not imperative.

Sigmund Freud was developing his theories of psychoanalysis in Vienna during the years that Charlotte and Emerich walked its streets, but it was common and simpler for most people to fall back upon older assumptions about the mental health of women, and husbands still exercised surprisingly broad prerogatives regarding the legal capacity of their wives or even their commitment to mental institutions.³

Whatever toll the stresses of the Great War period had taken on both Emerich and Charlotte, the worst was yet to come. On March 12, 1938, the German Army marched into Austria, signaling its annexation into the German Reich. Three days later, Adolph Hitler addressed the people of the city from a terrace at the former winter palace of the Habsburgs. Emerich and Wilhelm Teuber promptly wrote a letter to Baden-Powell in London about the prohibition of scouting in Austria by the headquarters of the Hitler Youth.

After a month of rounding up potential objectors to Nazi rule, a sham referendum was held. Among his circle of contacts, Emerich urged resistance, but the official result was 99% approval. Just weeks later, the *Salzburger Volksblatt* carried this notice:

Vienna, May 21, 1938
Charlotte Teuber, née Drifton-Coxe, died here. She was the wife of the scout leader Captain Emerich Teuber, known as “Papa Teuber”. The deceased came from an immensely rich American family of coal mine owners.

In November, Emerich was arrested, charged with treason, and placed in pre-trial detention.⁴

¹ *Elizabeth Sinkler Coxe's Tales from the Grand Tour*, p. 98.

² According to some sources, the term “Americanitis” originated among European observers of American culture, but it was widely adopted. Rexall even advertised a special elixir that was said to ease the malady.

³ On both sides of the Atlantic, women of means seem to have been subject to particular mental scrutiny when their behavior threatened the financial interests of other family members. The widow of Henry B. Coxe suffered this fate when, at age 63, she sought to

marry an English physician. Successive Philadelphia headlines tell the story: *Mrs. Coxe to Wed is Society Rumor* (March 11, 1906); and *Mrs. Coxe is of Unsound Mind* (December 19, 1906). A West Chester "Jury in Lunacy" placed her under the care of her son and her entire estate of \$2,600,000 stayed in the family when she died a year later.

⁴ Among the many others interrogated at this time was Sigmund Freud. Required to sign a statement that he had not been mistreated during his interview, he is said to have sarcastically responded, "I can highly recommend the Gestapo to everyone!"

20. Akin to Insanity

No cause of death was listed in Charlotte's brief obituary, but a family member would later attribute it to sepsis from an infected tooth. It is quite possible that normal medical services were disrupted in the chaos that accompanied the Anschluss. Emerich, acquitted of the treason charge in 1939, lived for another four years.

When, after another period of isolationism, the United States was drawn into World War II, history repeated itself. The family's reliable income from America was once again disrupted. Emerich lived comfortably through the period by liquidating some of the couple's accumulated real estate and he took up volunteer work through the officially authorized apparatus, the *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (NSV). Some sources connect his eventual death with injuries (or a failed suicide attempt) during his incarceration.

Charlotte's son Oskar experienced issues that were far less serious than those of his disabled sister Emerica. At Klagenfurt, he participated in the family avocation of scouting, and he became involved in archaeology, probably following with interest the explorations of his American cousin Eckley Coxe Junior. Less of an adventurer than Eckley, he participated in excavations at one of the largest Roman sites in the Eastern Alps— just seven miles to the north of the Teuber house, Ehrenbichl.

Caught in the general narrative of Coxe family “degeneration” which seems to have been accepted among his Austrian relatives in the 1920s, Oskar also faced perplexing circumstances that began with the German annexation. His earlier designation as a legal incompetent may have been expedient for the management of the complicated Teuber finances. But the incoming National Socialists held the infamous objective of “purifying” the national stock from hereditary weaknesses. Hilda Osterhout Young believed that Oskar was subjected to sterilization under the Nazi regime, along with thousands of others— and I later found this assumption confirmed and explained in a press account.

But Oskar— apparently living semi-independently at Klagenfurt— still had access to resources attractive to the new authorities. He was persuaded to join the Nazi party— the very entity that would soon ensure that he was the last Coxe descendant in the European branch.¹ When America entered the war, the substantial stake in American properties and income payments that should have accrued to Oskar as an heir of his mother were placed on hold.

After an unexplained “falling out” with the rest of the Austrian family, Oskar sought greater autonomy, selling personal belongings to purchase a small guesthouse in Salzburg. It was during this time that he cut Charlotte's portrait from its marketable golden frame, keeping only the formal painted image of his mother from a bygone era. It was an act at the intersection of sentiment and desperation. Some years later, Oskar's unusual situation caught the attention of the syndicated American columnist Holmes Alexander:

In the early 20th century, a Philadelphia heiress, descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, married an Austrian and they had a son and a daughter, both sadly deficient. The son, Oskar Teuber, born in 1906, was declared incompetent in 1933 by the pre-Nazi Austrian courts so that a guardian could be appointed for his person and property.

But in 1939, Oskar Teuber, having undergone therapy, applied to have his competency reinstated. By 1941, with Austria Nazified— he was declared okay, for a very suspect purpose. No mental defective was allowed to join the Nazi Party. But funds and dues were needed. So Teuber became legally sane— and a Nazi. Yet in

1942, applying for a marriage license, he ran into another rule of German National Socialism, a paternalistic form of rulership. Having once been a defective (although legally “cured”) he was forced, as a condition of marriage, to undergo sterilization to protect the “purity” of the Germanic race.

Well, poor fellow, what was he now— sane or insane? With the Nazi collapse, the Austrian state was restored by inches, first under the occupying powers, the United States, France, Britain and Germany, later under full local sovereignty. But Teuber was now hoisted between the pillars of governmentopolis. Section 2 of the Trading With Enemies Act, 1946, says that alien property must be returned if it is in our “national interest” to do so. But the Justice Department, under the 1946 act, holds that we have a “national interest” in keeping the belongings of the pathetic Teuber, a dues-paying Nazi.

All three governments— ours, Hitler’s, and Austria’s, have combined to pester this unfortunate man now living with his wife in Salzburg, and to paw over his property— some of it in Philadelphia. The latest claim, made by private lawyers to Congress and the government, is that Teuber never was a Nazi. How could he be— a sterilized incompetent, not even eligible to perpetuate the “master race”?

The whole yarn doesn’t prove much about the victim but proves a lot about the institution called government. It should be taken like sleeping pills— as little as possible to get by.²

The back-and-forth arguments for and against Oskar’s sanity generated conflicting biographical claims. For example, Austrian scouting histories record the old assumption of hereditary mental illness, but elsewhere say with unusual diagnostic precision that his abnormalities were caused by a fall from a horse and “a bone fragment that moved through his brain.” Apparently, editors opted to leave the sensitive question unresolved.

Hilda Osterhout Young and her family visited Austria at around the time that the alien property dispute was finally settled. They met Oskar and his wife at their *Hotel Erzherzog Johann*³ at Fischbachstraase 63 in Salzburg. Mrs. Young told me that it was Oskar’s wife who ran the little guesthouse, while he contently passed much of his time among his books on an upper floor. Her account of the visit causes me to think of Brinton Coxe’s fondly imagined private library and to wonder whether what was passed between the generations was not so much madness as passions that failed to square with family expectations...

¹ Any children of Oskar Teuber would have been entitled to generous lifetime income.

² “Three Governments vs. a Pathetic Man”, *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 1960, p. 46. Holmes Alexander’s opinion piece made the episode seem relatively inconsequential, except as a cautionary tale about government intrusion. But the sums involved were significant. An “Agreement regarding the return of Austrian property, rights, and interests” signed in Washington on January 30, 1959 lists property totaling \$1,126,093.76, including stocks and bonds, real estate, mineral rights, and “interest in a trust under the last will and testament of Brinton Coxe, deceased”.

³ Archduke Johann is often considered the “Liberal Habsburg”, noted for his progressive interest in education and the welfare of the people. Perhaps Oskar chose the name of this historical figure after personal experience of three orders of rule in Austria during his lifetime.

21. Missing Letters

Unlike the wealth of correspondence that documents the lives of Brinton and Maria Coxe, letters exchanged by the next generation are scarce. While Charlotte is known to have communicated from Europe with her sisters and brother, the letters are lost due to a variety of circumstances— ranging from residential fires to simple changes of habit. Photographs, on the other hand, seem to have been treated with great care and were assembled into albums that still emerge from time to time— startling both descendants and researchers with the visual immediacy that they bring to these names and stories from the past.

We can confidently surmise that many family matters were discussed through the mail. During the years after their marriages, both Edmund and Polly lost young children. For Edmund, it was an infant daughter who died while he was attempting to launch his career as a mining engineer in the bituminous (“soft coal”) region of Clearfield County, Pennsylvania.¹ In Polly’s case, it was a 3-year old daughter lost to the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1919 while her husband served abroad as a military medic. Much later, Edmund’s grief would be compounded when a son (named Brinton for his grandfather) committed suicide by rifle while staying at his grandmother’s home in Drifton.² Indeed, of Charlotte’s three siblings in America, Edmund’s life may be the most complex and touched by tragedy.

While the original Coxe Brothers accepted their father’s charge to develop the family coal lands, the pool of equally motivated successors was limited. Among the sons of the original partners, Charles’ son Eckley Junior had other interests, and Alexander’s son Daniel met an unfortunate end . This “Danny” Coxe, seriously ailing since childhood, had nonetheless showed signs of his uncle’s mechanical genius— even working with the Coxe Brothers shops to create a reduced scale working locomotive that fascinated all of his younger cousins. But while he was riding the miniature train engine on an autumn evening in 1895, it suddenly derailed. The trauma of the accident exacerbated his heart condition and he died later on the same day.

The train wreck and Danny’s death were widely reported, often with speculation that the 28-year old deceased was “worth a million dollars or more”. What went unmentioned in the newspaper accounts was that there was a passenger on the locomotive during the fatal ride— Charlotte’s brother Edmund. Four days later, Maria Coxe told Emily Hare:

(Danny) was running his small engine himself, with Edmund just behind him, when the locomotive was derailed and Dan was thrown down the bank. It was thought at first that he had sustained no further injuries...

Whether or not Edmund’s presence on the fatal ride had any effect on the stability of the locomotive, the experience was surely unsettling to the 14-year-old. Coming so soon after the deaths of his father and uncle, Danny’s death may have affected him profoundly. Exactly when he shifted his career thoughts toward mining is uncertain, but doing so would have won immediate approval from the bereaved Drifton relatives.

It was thought that Edmund shared the physical susceptibility of his father, and among the four Coxe children, he was the one who was most frequently the object of his parents’ concern. Like Charlotte, he studied for a time at a private school in Chestnut Hill— William S. Blight, Jr.’s School for Boys— before matriculating at Harvard. Based on the list of ushers enlisted for his wedding, he had widened his circle of friends well beyond Philadelphia by 1903.

A problem with money management appears in his early correspondence from school. Just before its affectionate close, an 1896 letter to his mother ends with an appeal:

I wish you would send me my allowance as I am very hard up. I have not got a cent, and of course I have to apply to Mr. Crossman for money to go to the cricket match. I am, dearest Mummy, ever your loving little kid, Edmund Coxe.

But what was easily dismissed as youthful indiscretion seems to have continued into adulthood. A preserved letter from Edmund to his uncle (Maria's brother George Fisher) in 1914 indicates that his relatives recognized, and were becoming concerned about, his tendency to live beyond his means.

My Dear Uncle George,

I am leaving the Wanamaker and Strawbridge and Clothier bills. The latter has been running for a long time as you may see. I wish to thank you for the trouble you have taken on my account. Now that I have the weight of these debts off my shoulders, I hope to be able to prove to you and to my mother that I can keep myself straight.

Your affectionate nephew, Edmund J. D. Coxe

George Fisher sent the letter on to his sister Maria Coxe, mentioning that Edmund had received his commission for the sale of a mine. This, he hoped, would help the situation.³

It may have been a difficult time to launch a mining career, with many economic, labor force and technological changes affecting the industry. Just a year before he struggled to settle his Philadelphia retail accounts, Edmund wrote an article on "Open Air Coal Mining" for the *Scientific American Supplement*. He discusses the increased use of coal extraction by surface "stripping" in the anthracite region and its financial advantages:

In the first place, after the cover has been removed, all coal in the bed becomes available, and 100 percent goes to market instead of having to leave 15 to 40 percent in the ground as is necessary with underground mining. In the second place, the coal can be mined by steam-shovel at a small fraction of the labor cost of underground work... The largest stripping in existence is at the Drifton colliery of Coxe Bros. & Company.

Still, Edmund says, removing the covering soil and rock is expensive, and the question "Will it pay?" to strip a particular tract is a challenging one for the mine engineer. Unmentioned in the article is the massive disruption of the local terrain evidenced in his accompanying photographs from Drifton. One photo appears with the caption "Big enough to look like the Panama Canal".

Perhaps his struggle to find a place in this changing world of mining led Edmund to look toward a different future. In 1926, he was issued U.S. Patent #1,814,897 for an "Apparatus for Utilizing Solar Heat", a large device that used moveable mirrors to concentrate the rays of the sun onto a fluid-filled conduit. The idea was to transfer solar energy for other applications. A photograph of the full-size working model—labeled as the "Edmund Coxe Sun Motor" is in the research files of Dr. James Bohning in the archives of Lehigh University. No actual resulting uses of the patent are noted in the record.



Edmund was the last of the Coxes who attempted to follow the mining imperative passed down to sons of the family; perhaps the last “by land possessed”. But his particular gifts may not have matched the challenges and the changing times. Without drawing explicit conclusions about Edmund’s well-being, Helen Weatherly remembered an evening call at Edmund’s house by her father, the Rector of St. James Church. He was met by Edmund with something less than courtesy, and a servant quickly intervened, “You will have to forgive him, Mr. Ware. He is not himself tonight.” Edmund’s death in a Philadelphia hotel in 1934 was attributed to alcohol-related liver disease and chronic heart issues. His son, named after his cousin Danny, would manage (from an office in Drifton) numerous sales and leases of Coxe mining property and the resulting trust funds that would benefit all of the Coxe heirs for many years to come.

Charlotte’s sister Polly Coxe Gerhard died in 1925; Eliza Coxe Young survived them all, eventually acquiring Windy Hill after the death of Eckley Junior without a direct heir. Conscious of the contrast between the opulent summer house that she now owned and the living circumstances of families displaced by Drifton strip mining, she offered them plots of land at the nominal price of \$5 each, resulting in a small residential area that became known as Youngstown. She also donated generously toward private efforts to restore the scarred Drifton landscape.

Windy Hill caught fire just three weeks after Charlotte’s death in Vienna.

¹ The child was buried in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Cemetery in Houtzdale, an indication that the young couple envisioned a long stay in the area, well removed from Philadelphia. A 1907 news item mentions their recently built “handsome summer residence” at Houtzdale, but local historians there are unfamiliar with Edmund’s work or the house. Most later mentions place him in Drifton or Philadelphia.

² The death of Edmund’s son Brinton is another chapter in the Coxe family story that yielded multiple narratives. Competing headlines ranged from “Philadelphia Youth Killed While Cleaning Rifle” (*Reading Times*) to the strangely passive “Bullet From Rifle Kills Brinton Coxe as He Lies in Bed” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*). The latter account adds the sad detail “Scion of Prominent Philadelphia Family Found Dead by Father.” Another paper mentions “a rifle bullet wound over his left temple, accidentally inflicted” and adds that the 17-year-old had come to Maria Coxe’s house from Phillips Andover Academy to recover from an illness, “but was in a rather nervous condition”. (*Scranton Republican*). Understandably, family members were not of one mind on how to navigate the shock and potential stigma of young Brinton’s death.

³ At about this time, Edmund pursued a legal action in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas against the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, arguing that two rare volumes containing oaths of allegiance signed by prominent Philadelphians after the American Revolution should belong to him personally, based on the provision in his father’s will that left his books to Edmund. The court ruled in favor of the Historical Society which Brinton had long served as president.



Charlotte's Copy of Keble



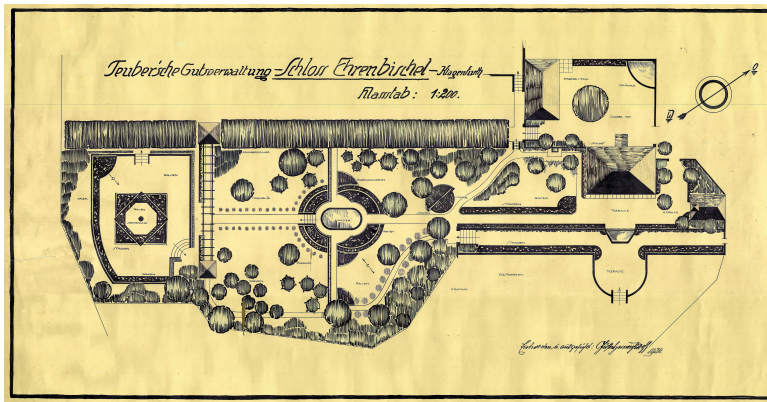
Emerich "Papa" Teuber



Oskar and Emerica



Oskar's "Vacation"



Design for Charlotte & Emerich's Garden at Ehrenbichl



Maria Schlessinger and "Ossi" Teuber

22. LAST THINGS

The German takeover in 1938 deeply affected the entire Teuber family — none moreso than Emerich's brother "Ossi". While Austria was never exempt from antisemitism, the deliberate inclusiveness of the Habsburg Officer Corps was indeed a visible ribbon holding together the diverse lands, ethnicities and language groups ruled by Franz Joseph. Jews represented a larger percentage of the officer corps than the general population and close interaction was normal within its circle. So Ossi's marriage to Maria Schlesinger, of German Jewish heritage, was unexceptional.

All of that changed dramatically with the Anschluss.

Members of the Austrian army were transferred to German command — a situation affecting at least one of Emerich's nephews whose unit was absorbed into the Wehrmacht. And Ossi and his wife were in increasing peril despite his position as a respected citizen of Innsbruck and a decorated combat veteran of the previous war. In April of 1943, a local order was issued for Maria's deportation. The retired colonel made frantic efforts through various contacts to have the edict lifted, but to no avail. As Philipp Lehar writes,

As a last action of resistance and autonomy, the couple committed suicide.

In the post-war years, a friend of Ossi and Maria who survived two concentration camps cared for their simple grave in Innsbruck.

One of the last family pictures of the assembled Teubers is evocative. At the center of the photograph are grouped Oskar Teuber, with his hand on the shoulder of his sister Emerica (Emmi). Emerich Teuber stands beside his son and behind a smiling Maria Schlesinger, who embraces Charlotte's young niece and namesake Charlotte (Lotte). Charlotte is seated at the right side of the group in front of Maurus. Maria's husband Ossi is the brother appearing in uniform.



Lotte, the little girl who appears front and center, was the daughter of Emerich's brother Wilhelm Teuber-Weckersdorf (top left) and his wife Irma Jagitsch (lower left). Much like the pattern among the Coxes in America, Wilhelm and Irma named their two children after close relatives — Charlotte and Emerich.

The timing of Lotte's life was such that she experienced Nazi oppression at an early age and reportedly was expelled from high school for refusing to give the Hitler salute. After working as a Red Cross volunteer during the war, she joined her father in efforts to resurrect the Austrian scouting movement after its end, serving as a leader of the Girl Scouts in Salzburg and later nationally. She studied archaeology and art history in Innsbruck, worked for a year in a camp for refugees from the failed Hungarian uprising, and won a postgraduate scholarship for study at Harvard, eventually earning a PhD. in political science.¹

Charlotte Teuber-Weckersdorf's presence in America brought the long story of her aunt, Charlotte Drifton Coxe full circle. She met with her American relatives in the Young family and shared what little she knew about her aunt's death in Vienna. During the visit, she wore a ring that had belonged to Charlotte.

Emmi Teuber lived out her days at the family's Salzburg house—cared for by a private duty nurse, quite removed from the scouting activity that once again flourished there under the direction of the Teuber-Weckersdorfs. Toward the end of his life, Oskar stayed in a retirement home, sometimes mysteriously disappearing for travels that seem to have included Baden-Baden and the Far East.² A letter written to Oskar's Salzburg address by the estate agent Daniel Coxe (who was about to retire from his position) was returned undelivered:

I have been meaning to reply to your New Year's card ever since I received it. While I have sent all my business correspondence to Dr. Jatzko, I have been wondering how you were personally. I would like to keep in personal touch with all my cousins...

He had come to know Charlotte's children and their various caretakers and legal representatives rather well, since every major transaction affecting the Coxe lands and invested funds required their consent, along with the more readily available American heirs. But perhaps he also felt the special connection of common ground. Early in his years as the manager of Coxe affairs in Drifton, he had spent his free time walking the breezy hillside where Charlotte's childhood home once stood:

STARTS VINEYARD

Daniel Coxe, land agent for the Coxe Estate, has planted several hundred grape vines at the rear of the old Brinton Coxe property, Drifton, and plans to conduct horticultural experiments at the new vineyard.³

A few grapevines still grow wild on the hill.

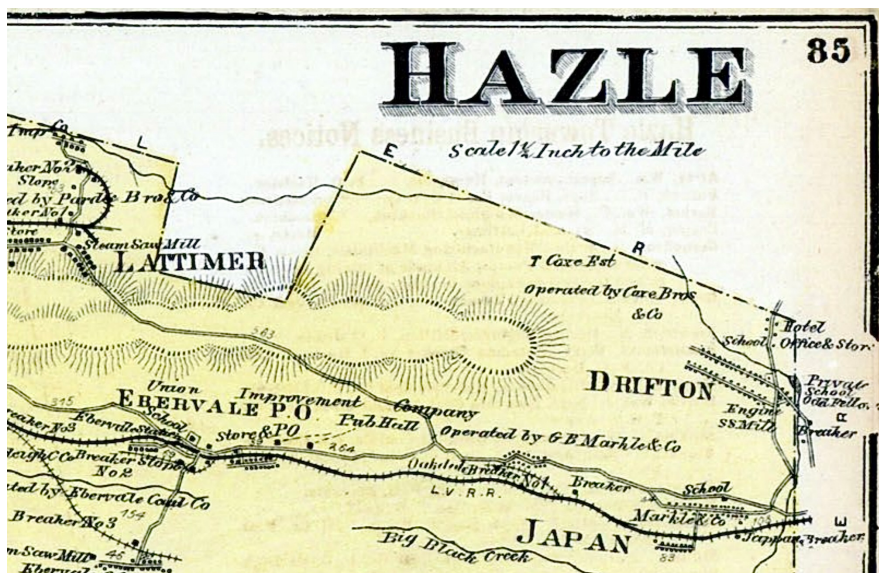
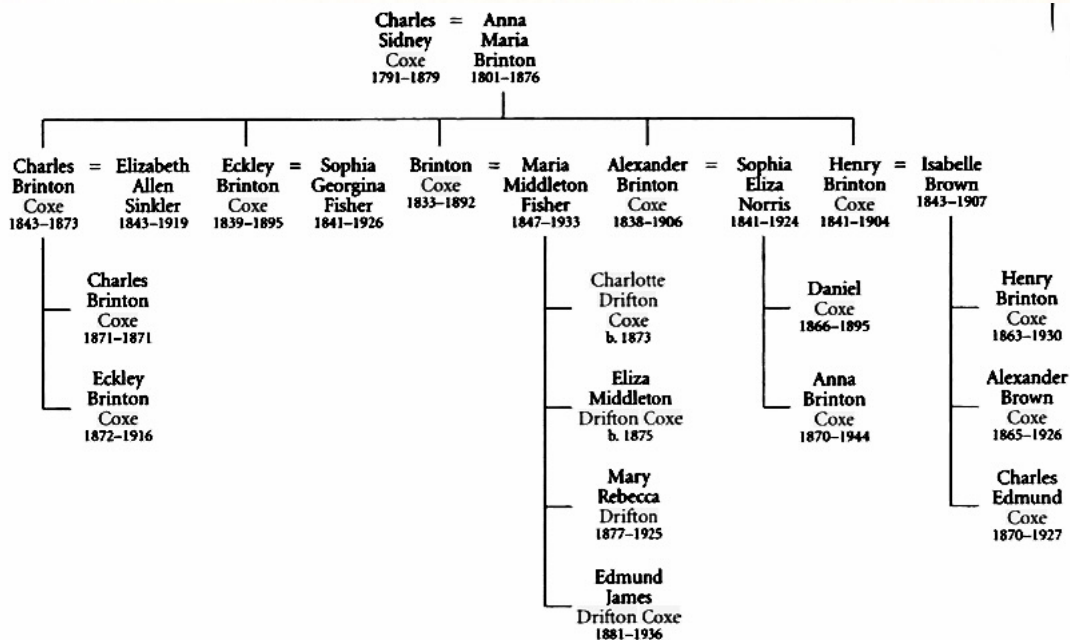


¹ Before returning to Austria, Charlotte Teuber-Weckersdorf served for a time on the faculty of Emmanuel College in Boston, where she made a distinct impression on Mary Grimley Mason, a faculty colleague and personal friend: "I had never before met a person who was so absolutely fearless as Charlotte. She had no sense of limitations on what she could do or where she could go." Mason goes on to describe her as "a kind of superwoman figure in my pantheon of outstanding women." — Mary Grimley Mason, *Life Prints*, p. 167.

² A rather amusing 1974 article in German entitled "Millionär auf Tauchstation" (Millionaire on Vacation: Murder Alert for Travel-Happy Pensioner) describes an absence of eight and a half months, which apparently aroused the concern of friends and international authorities.

³ *Hazleton Plain Speaker*, August 23, 1940, p. 9

COXE BROS. & CO.



The Coxe Brothers of Drifton

Epilogue: Too Numerous to Mention...

Over my years of intermittent exploration of Charlotte Coxe's story, I became familiar with many fascinating characters who made up the circle of Coxe relatives and friends. The great challenge was to stay on task— letting these compelling figures pass through the periphery of the story like comets in the night sky. I quickly realized that they should be noted and appreciated, but not followed too closely. But because they help to convey the richness and surprising variety within Charlotte's world, I include these vignettes:

(1) Angelina Middleton Basile

Charlotte's mother Maria guarded her daughters' reputations— as indicated by her expressed concern about Charlotte's "ways". Yet she was drawn with deep personal affection to a cousin whose life was notable for a succession of social adventures.

Their bond developed during Maria's childhood visits to Middleton Place in South Carolina. Close to Maria in age, Angelina was the daughter of the plantation heir Arthur Middleton and his Italian wife, Contessa Paulina Bentivoglio. After the Civil War and Angelina's relocation to Italy, she and Maria remained in regular contact through trans-Atlantic letters (alternating freely between English and Italian) and eventually through personal visits in America and in Europe.

From general descriptions provided by their peers, it is hard to imagine a more unlikely pair than these cousins. Maria was conservative in taste and social viewpoint, regarded by many as rather melancholy in temperament. Yet her cousin Angelina, to whom she was so fondly attached, seems to have been quite the opposite. Readily adapting to the homeland of her mother, she is described by Italian journalist Andrea Cotticelli as "young and beautiful, with an independent character and an almost inexhaustible cheerfulness— a Scarlett O'Hara in 19th century Rome."



Maria Middleton Fisher Coxe



Angelina Middleton Basile

In Cotticelli's telling, Angelina became the lively star of numerous salons and was associated with prominent figures such as Count Giuseppe Primoli, a noted *bon vivant*, and Prince Gerolamo Bonaparte, a cousin of Emperor Napoleon III. Both friendships apparently generated considerable public interest and conversation. But perhaps her most surprising and scandalizing attachment developed in 1892— an impending marriage that was reported to

Maria in a letter from her brother George H. Fisher, who appears in the family correspondence whenever matters with financial implications are discussed. George says:

Angelina writes that “the name of the young man (only 30) is Emmanuele Basile and he is a son of one of the first prefetti of the Kingdom, senator and a man of great talent, and his son promises to follow his example”.

Maria’s vigilant brother adds his opinion:

Of course, he has no money. I hope it may be all right but it is hard to believe. But Angelina has been so swindled by Benti and Bice¹ that I dare say it may be a relief to her to support a husband.

Your loving brother, Geo. F.

This quickly arranged marriage to a handsome Sicilian Count many years her junior does not seem to have bothered the free-spirited Angelina, but Maria would later confirm George’s intuition about the practicality of the match. Writing to Emily Hare from Italy two years later, Maria says:

I have seen a great deal of my cousin Angelina of whom I am very fond. She has married a man 17 years younger and so far is contented, though her affairs are in a very bad way owing to her brother’s extravagance.

Did this mix of old southern ties and urgent need lead Maria to offer her assistance? Hilda Osterhout Young recalled a family story about a generous loan that strained family resources just as the Coxe daughters were setting out in the social world of Philadelphia. The tale centered on an aristocratic woman remembered by Maria’s descendants only as “La Doña”— either with deference or a twist of ironic wit.

Whatever the case, these two cousins remained close— with Maria bringing Angelina to Drifton in 1905 to nurse her to health through her personal regimen of rest and country air:

Angelina, my cousin, who arrived from Naples on August 1st already is better for the change of air and quiet life. I make her drink all the milk she can swallow, and we sit out of doors under the pine trees for several hours every day...

Perhaps their very *differences* provided a lifelong course of mutual therapy.

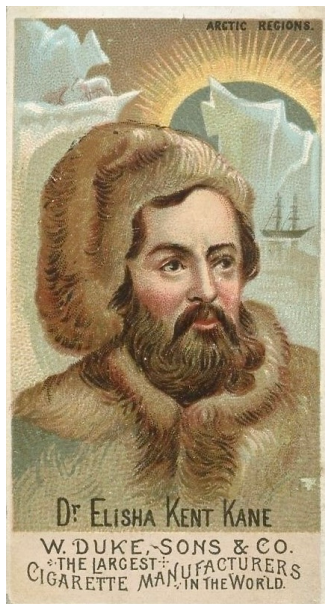
(2) Elisha Kent Kane

Charlotte’s mother Maria was the youngest of the four daughters of Joshua Francis Fisher of Philadelphia and his wife Elizabeth Middleton of Charleston. Each of the Fisher daughters married into prominent Philadelphia families— the Kanes, Cadwaladers and (in the instance of both Sophia and Maria) the Coxes. (The two Fisher brothers, George and Henry were born after all of the girls.)

The Fishers’ eldest daughter Elizabeth married attorney Robert Patterson Kane— thereby becoming the sister-in-law of the arctic explorer Elisha Kent Kane, one of the most famous adventurers of the nineteenth century. Of his popularity, a biographer has written:

If homesteaders heading west across the United States' frontier carried two books, one was certainly by Dr. Kane- the other was probably a Bible.

After training as a physician and successfully publishing medical research, Kane sought a more active life in the navy. Indeed, his brief life consisted of successive efforts to escape the boredom of routine pursuits. Typical of his voluntary actions were descending into an active Philippine volcano to obtain water samples and carrying a message from President Polk to the American commander in Mexico City during the Mexican-American War.



Learning of a planned Arctic expedition to rescue the missing British explorer, Sir John Franklin, Kane wrote to the Secretary of War requesting that he be assigned as the ship's surgeon. Although the arduous voyage did not achieve its primary goal, Kane's gifts as a narrator of the adventure led to the publication of his first book and to speaking engagements around the country— including at the newly organized Smithsonian Institution.. During this time, he also developed a plan to renew the search for Franklin— this time as the captain of the brig *Advance*.

Once again, Franklin eluded the searchers. His fate was not learned until several years later. But the drama of leading his crew through two arduous winters in the Arctic provided the material for Kane's most famous book, *Arctic Explorations: The Second Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin 1853-54-55*. Ultimately, their survival had depended on a series of bold and creative accommodations as well as fortuitous connections established by Kane with a band of nomadic Inuits.

Elisha Kent Kane died at the age of 37, sixteen years before Charlotte's birth. But during her lifetime, she would have heard his story from her aunt and uncle— or at least parts of it. Kane's legacy was somewhat clouded during those years by the appearance of another book titled *The Love-Life of Dr. Kane: Containing the Correspondence, and a History of the Acquaintance, Engagement, and Secret Marriage Between Elisha K. Kane and Margaret Fox*. The author was one of the three Fox sisters at the center of the "spirit rapping" spiritualist phenomenon that spread worldwide from upstate New York.

The posthumous publication of Elisha Kent Kane's letters to Margaret Fox and her claims about their relationship drew Charlotte's uncle, Robert Patterson Kane, into the highly publicized controversy. According to Fox, an undefined \$5,000 payment to Robert Kane in the explorer's will was intended for her benefit.

While Elisha Kent Kane and Margaret Fox were very different people— one with a scientific bent and the other immersed in popular esotericism— they each captivated American audiences of the late 19th century. For his 2004 study of their intertwined lives, historian David Chapin selected a title that places them both in the context of their era— *Exploring other Worlds: Margaret Fox, Elisha Kent Kane and the Antebellum Culture of Curiosity*.

(3) Arthur Morris Young

Soon after their marriages, both Charlotte and Eliza Coxe were settled in Europe. Charlotte and Emerich resided in Trento and Vienna; Eliza and her artist husband Charles Morris Young divided their time between Paris and Giverny. The two couples were in contact and

the Youngs signed Charlotte's will as her legal witnesses— one of her first matters of business on arriving from Philadelphia. (Apparently, the Coxe daughters agreed that personally tending to the direction of their future wealth was a matter of primary importance.)

Charlotte and Eliza's families began to grow in tandem. Eight months after Emerica Teuber's birth in Austria, Arthur Young was born in France. And while the original Coxe brothers accepted the responsibility to develop the coal lands, and their sons struggled to define themselves against that expectation, the third generation would have both the means and the personal freedom to imagine their own futures. It may be significant that Arthur Young experienced his first year of life while his parents moved among the French Impressionists. His view of vocational possibilities was never constrained by the hard edges of the Drifton legacy.

Arthur Young exhibited mechanical skills from an early age— building and sailing model boats at the old Pennsylvania farmstead to which his family soon returned. But the quickly expanding range of his interests was indicated by the Princeton academic majors through which he moved— from astronomy to mathematics and philosophy— the latter with the ambitious goal of devising a comprehensive theory of the universe.



Arthur graduated from Princeton in the year that Lindberg flew solo across the Atlantic, and soon charted his own highly individual path. Convinced that the practical and theoretical were closely related, he sought inspiration among the wide-ranging files of the United States Patent Office— soon settling on development of the helicopter as an area of specific interest. Over the next nineteen years he would obtain his own related patents and, working with Bell Aircraft, developed the Bell Model 47, the first commercially licensed helicopter. A thing of mechanical efficiency and elegant design, it was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art.

That accomplished, Charlotte's nephew Arthur returned to his broader vocation of philosophy, describing this new phase of his life as the search for the "psychocopter":

What is the psychocopter? It is the winged self. It is that which the helicopter usurped— and what the helicopter was finally revealed not to be...

His published corpus includes numerous books with titles such as *Geometry of Meaning*, *The Reflexive Universe*, and *Mathematics, Physics and Reality*. He tracks the unusual progress of his thinking in another book called *The Bell Notes: A Journey from Physics to Metaphysics*. He also founded the institute for the Study of Consciousness in Berkeley, California to propagate his theories.

A television host began an interview with Arthur Young with these insightful words:

Today we're going to be discussing a small topic -- the nature of the self and the universe...

¹ Angelina's brother, known as Count Henry Bentivoglio Van Ness Middleton (Benti) and his wife Beatrice (Bice).

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American Philosophical Society

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Apart from the satisfaction of recovering a forgotten story from many decades in the past, there is a singular pleasure in making acquaintances along the way. Over the fifteen years of this personal project, many people responded graciously to my questions and my recurring needs for documents, photographs and recollections.

The length of the undertaking, delayed many times when other pursuits took precedence, turned out to be a blessing. Wonderful surprises kept emerging. Previously unseen documents were forwarded to me by people who knew about my interests, and new clues emerged from the pages of unrelated books and magazines. The network of individuals who held and shared meaningful pieces of Charlotte's story kept growing. I am deeply indebted to them all.

First and foremost among these contributors to the cause are the descendants of the Coxe and Teuber families who were the source of invaluable memories passed down to them: Hilda Osterhout Young and Philip Young who invited me into their homes in Wayne and Drifton, Pennsylvania and Roger Teuber-Weckersdorf who first met with me at a hotel cafe in Vienna. Onto the structure of those early conversations, everything else was grafted.

Vital to fleshing out the story were historians, both professional and avocational, who generously shared their knowledge and insights. Bryan Dunnigan and his wife Donna gave me a personal tour of the wonderfully conserved house of Eckley and Sophia Coxe at Drifton— a memorable immersion in the 19th century setting of Charlotte's early life. Bryan has been my go-to sounding board for many ideas over the intervening years— and spared me from lingering too long in unproductive "rabbit holes".

Dr. James Bohning at Lehigh University shared his plan to author two related biographies—one on the industrialist Eckley B. Coxe and another on his philanthropist wife Sophia— both noteworthy figures. After his death, I was generously assisted in reviewing Dr. Bohning's extensive research files by Ilhan Citak, archivist at Lehigh's Special Collections. (The image of those unpublished boxes often spurred my push toward completion of this manuscript!)

Offering valuable assistance on specific subjects were Dr. Angie LeClerq at The Citadel; Philipp Lehar at the University of Innsbruck; Dr. Gert Groening at the Berlin University of the Arts; and Dr. Ian Foster of the University of Bristol. Helping with the identification and retrieval of archived material in key collections were Joe DiLullo at the American Philosophical Society; Kay Peterson at the National Museum of American History; and David Haugard, Christopher Damiani and Steven Smith at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Several of the authors noted in the attached bibliography provided helpful responses to my inquiries, including Nancy M. Heinzen and Mary Mason.

As in the case of all of my explorations, my wife Barbara Ammerman Shaffer has been my most valued collaborator— as archival assistant, skilled proofreader, and willing travel companion to some very unusual locations. There are many advantages to having a professional librarian in residence, especially such an agreeable one.

Finally, I want to extend a note of thanks to Charlotte Drifton Coxe— who never sought or anticipated my interest in her life story, but left behind the elements of a trail that would make it possible to follow from a distance. Do the young Scouts and Guides of Austria realize that she was one of the major sources of financial support for the development of their movement in the twentieth century? Probably not. Perhaps that more meaningful acknowledgment will come in due time.